

PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Post Office, November 7, 1898, by Frank Tousey.

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Price 5 Cents.

JACK WRIGHT AND HIS OCEAN PLUNGER;

OR, THE HARPOON HUNTERS OF THE ARCTIC.

By "NO NAME".



A volley of arrows shot toward the boat, and a swarm of natives, numbering several hundred, came from their places of concealment behind the ice hills. Those who were nearest managed to clamber aboard the boat as she grazed the shore.

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Complete Stories of Adventure.

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NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 2, 1903.

Price 5 Cents.

JACK WRIGHT AND HIS OCEAN PLUNGER;

OR,

The Harpoon Hunters of the Arctic.

By "NONAME,"

CHAPTER I.

THE WRECK OF THE SEA BIRD.

as there's midnight on the broad Atlantic Ocean in the month of August, not many years ago, and a furious tempest was raging along the coast.

"I'm waves were rolling and tossing, the rain was pouring and thunder crashed, the wind shrieked and roared, and flashes of forked lightning incessantly split the murky sky.

us and the chaos of warring elements a tug-boat was fighting its way up the coast from the harbor of New York, with heavy seas breaking over it, the crew inside, and a passenger winding in the pilot-house with the captain.

The passenger was a man of about thirty. He was a young fellow, clad in an ordinary business suit, wearing a black derby; his lip was adorned by a black mustache, and his dark, angular features, and snappy black boots, noted a nature at once determined, hazardous, yet withal and generous.

That afraid we ain't goin' to have a very easy time a-reachin' Lightstown Bay in this storm, Charley Clark," said the captain in doubtful tones. "The wind is dead ahead, and the seas are so heavy that it is a hard job to manage the wheel. Can't we get anywhere near the place yet?" queried the young man as he peered out the pilot-house window in a vain endeavor to look through the intense gloom, while the rain beat against the glass in his face.

"It is fully a league further on," answered the captain, as he pointed ahead. "Do you see yonder light? It's in a tower on the headland, and the opening into the bay is so narrow and rocky I'm almost afraid to risk running into the inlet in this storm."

"Remember, Captain, that the newspaper I represent, which ordered this boat to bring me here, demands of me to reach Lightstown to-night by water, since I cannot get there by land on account of the washout on the railroad."

"Well, Charley; I'll risk the danger if you say so."

"Then go ahead, sir," replied the reporter emphatically. "The newspaper has settled an agreement with Jack Wright, the boy inventor of submarine boats, who lives in yonder place, by which he is to start off for the Arctic, in search of the lost crew of the exploring expedition of the Ice King tomorrow. At the last moment, it was decided to send me to accompany Wright; but no news to that effect was sent to him as the washout that injured the railroad has also broken the telegraph wires. Wright is, therefore, ignorant that I am coming, and I don't want him to sail off in his boat without taking me."

The captain nodded.

He understood the case now.

Charley Clark was willing to risk any danger, in his zeal to carry out the orders of the newspaper that employed him, for the owners had to put up a reward of \$50,000 to induce a certain Jack Wright to undertake a search for the mentioned lost explorers.

The reporter was an orphan, born and bred in New York, and had been assigned to accompany Jack Wright, as he was known to be a bold, intrepid fellow, who was greatly devoted to his work.

On struggled the Sea Bird, as the tug was named, and she fought her way up to the opening in the headland an hour afterwards, and turned to go in, when there came a crash.

A billow had hurled her violently against one of the submerged rocks that were buried in the gloomy waters, and her rudder was torn off and a hole stove in her hull.

As soon as the extent of the damage was ascertained, a scene of intense confusion ensued.

The panic-stricken crew launched the frail quarter boat that laid keel upwards on top of the deck-house, and scrambling in, they selfishly rowed away, leaving the captain and Clark alone on the sinking tug-boat.

A few moments afterward the boat disappeared in the gloom, and the tug drifted along with the tide, and was buffeted by the fierce wind and waves.

Filled with horror, the captain and reporter glanced at each other.

"Abandoned to our fate!" exclaimed Clark, in dismay.

"The cowards!" hissed the captain furiously. "If we come out of this alive, I'll make them bitterly atone this dirty work."

"We are helplessly at the mercy of the storm."

"Aye, with a broken rudder and a hole stove in the hull, we stand a poor chance for salvation, Charley."

"Can you swim?"

"No."

"Neither can I."

"That's bad, lad, but there's some life preservers on board."

"Get them, and we may yet manage to reach land somehow."

It was a forlorn hope, for they were half a mile off shore now, and the boat was fast filling and rapidly sinking; but the captain rushed away to get them, as they had no time to spare.

By the time he returned with them the deck of the tug was under water, and every wave that struck her knocked her so far over that they feared she would list entirely over.

Both the reporter and captain were cool and collected, however, and resolved to stick to the boat till she went down.

They fastened the life preservers on their bodies, and turned to open the door to go out on deck in order to be in readiness to spring into the sea, when suddenly a brilliant shaft of blinding light flashed through the gloom upon them, and a moment afterward they heard the faint cry:

"Tug ahoy!"

"What's that?" gasped the startled captain.

"The searchlight of some vessel!" replied Clark, who now realized what the gleam was. "And that hail came from the ship. I'll reply. Ship ahoy! Help! Help! Help!"

Anxiously watching the dazzling light, they both saw a strange-looking craft bursting through the gloom, brilliantly lit up by electric lights that showed its outlines.

It was a huge craft, perfectly circular in shape, and made of a silvery metal resembling aluminum.

The flat deck was but few feet above the surface, was railed in, and surrounded by electric lights.

In the middle of the deck, which was broken with dead-lights, traps, skylights, stanchions and ring bolts, there arose a flat-roofed, round turret used as a pilot-house, on top of which stood the searchlight between two big guns.

There was a square extension to it, running aft (where part of an enormous propeller showed), divided in two, perforated by windows, and its railed roof formed a hurricane deck.

A high smokestack arose on each side of the deck-house, from which clouds of black smoke were pouring, while in various parts of the deck great ventilators were to be seen.

In the pilot-house there stood a boy at the wheel, clad in a naval costume, and in back of him an old bearded sailor, and a short, fat boy, wearing the clothing of a Dutchman.

"Tug ahoy!" shouted the boy at the wheel, upon a nearer approach.

"Save us!" yelled the captain frantically.

Their voices sounded faint and smothered in the noise of the elements, yet they distinctly heard each other.

"It's Jack Wright and his Ocean Plunger!" cried Clark.

"What!" gasped the captain, in astonishment.

"Look! There's the name on the front of the pilot-house."

In the glare of the electric lights the captain now saw it.

The owner of the singular-looking craft was the very one the reporter was coming from New York to see.

On rushed the Ocean Plunger straight toward the wreck, for though her deck was perfectly round her hull was ship-shaped underneath, and ranging close to the tug, its owner shouted.

"Come aboard now."

"Can you get any nearer?" roared the captain.

"No! The waves would dash the boats together."

"What are we to do, then?"

"Spring into the sea, and I will pick you up."

The two unfortunates went out upon the reeling upperdeck and flung themselves into the foaming billows.

Held aloft by their life preservers, they were tossed with the waves, and the Ocean Plunger dashed toward them.

The young inventor's two companions had now come out on deck, clad in oil-skins and armed with boat-hook.

As the queer vessel reached the captain, they caught him and hauled him upon the deck.

Clark, in the meantime, had vanished from view, but the boy in the pilot-house flashed the powerful rays of the searchlight over the surging waters, and soon located him some distance away near the wreck.

His life preserver had been loosened from his body by the violence of the waves, and the poor fellow was struggling with might and main to keep himself afloat.

Unable to swim, his strength would soon give out, and he was sure to drown.

Just then the tug-boat went down, and the suction caused by its descent pulled the struggling young reporter down under the water after it.

Jack Wright drove his vessel toward the spot where the drowning man had disappeared.

CHAPTER II.

JACK, TIM AND FRITZ.

The moment the Ocean Plunger reached the spot where the reporter sank, its owner pulled a lever upon a witch-board in front of him, setting a pump in motion, and the vessel began to sink.

Down she went until her deck was under the waves, and the three on the deck hastened into the nearest deck-house, which was raised several feet, and closed the water-tight door.

The boy inventor kept a keen glance fastened upon the sea, which was brightly illumined by the searchlight, and within a minute he saw the reporter come to the surface.

He then started the boat toward Clark, and as soon as his body floated over the deck, he reversed the lever he had pulled, when the boat rapidly arose above the surface again.

The reporter was thus lifted upon the deck.

He was half unconscious.

Out of the cabin rushed the fat Dutch boy, and seizing the recumbent man he dragged him into the boat, out of the danger of being washed back into the sea by the waves.

Here the three began to work in an effort to revive him, and Jack Wright started his boat for the inlet leading to the bay.

The boy was then in his minority.

He was a well-built, manly fellow, with dark hair and eyes, and was justly celebrated as the most wonderful inventor of submarine boats in the world.

He resided in the finest house in the beautiful fisher village surrounding the head of the bay, and there in the great workshops he had built on the bank of the creek at the foot of his garden he had turned out some wonderful inventions.

By the use of these marvels the orphaned boy had amassed an immense fortune, aided by his two companions, who always assisted him in his boat-building operations and went with him on his adventurous voyages.

The old sailor, who was named Tim Topstay, was a retired

marine much given to grog, tobacco and lies, and lived with Jack.

Fritz Schneider, the Dutch boy, was a waif whom Jack picked up in the village, and also lived at the young inventor's house.

He was an expert electrician, a good cook, a regular fire-eater by nature, and, like Tim, was as bold as a lion.

He waddled into the handsome turret a few moments afterwards, showing an extraordinary fat, dumpy figure, a round, fat face, watery blue eyes, and a mass of yellow flaxen hair, while in his mouth he held a pipe, at which he was puffing vigorously.

"Shiminey Christmas, vot a storms!" he panted. "Ve dit vos make some misdakes vhen ve oudt here coom und dry dot new infentions, der Ocean Plunger, by dis storms alretty."

"I'm glad we brought my new invention out, Fritz," the boy replied, "for this rough weather is the best test we could give her to find out how she will stand up in a seaway. Besides that, it has been the means of our saving the lives of those two unfortunate men; so, you see, we have already put the boat to some good use right at the start."

"I tink so, neider," assented the fat boy, with a nod.

"Have you revived the last one we picked up?"

"Yah! He all righd vhas alretty, und soon coom in here."

"Were there any more we could pick up?"

"Nein. Dot grew hook der gwarter poat, und run away."

"Cowards! Did they leave these two behind to perish?"

"Dot vas apoudt der size ouf id, vonct, Shack."

Just then the old sailor stumped in, for he had a wooden leg, and a glass eye, and pulling at the sandy beard that framed in his rugged face, he said:

"Blast my timbers, if them 'ere castaways ain't as sound as ther hulk o' a ironclad, lads, as near ter Davy Jones' locker as they've been."

"I'm glad to hear it, Tim."

"I reckerlect when I wuz a messmate o' yer father's, aboard ther ole frigate Wabash, in ther navy," began Tim, "we ran across the driftin' hulk o' a fore an' aft schooner, an' seen ten seamen aboard o' ther dismantled craft a-signalin' us ter rescue 'em. Headin' fer her, we took ther five men off——"

"You just said there were ten men," hinted Jack, with a wink at Fritz, for he had caught the old salt in a lie already.

"Did I?" asked Tim, looking surprised, and taking a big chew of navy plug. "Waal, never mind perticklers. Ter container——"

But just then Fritz took up an old accordeon, upon which he was wont to play, and began to grind out a tune.

Tim's yarn was brought to a climax like magic, for he hated that instrument as the demon hates holy water.

"Avast thar!" he roared, giving a hitch at his pants and glaring ferociously at Fritz out of his solitary eye. "Haul to, gosh blame yer figger-head, or I'll tear a hole in yer sky-lights."

The Dutch boy grinned, and ignored him.

He played all the more, and Tim's blood boiled.

He seized a stool to hurl it at his tormentor, when a fracas was averted by the entrance of Clark and the captain.

"Stop your row, boys!" exclaimed Jack.

Fritz laid down his accordeon, and Tim began to growl threats.

"Mr. Wright, allow me to thank you for saving my life," exclaimed the grateful reporter, shaking hands with the boy.

"You had a close call of it," replied Jack, as he left the wheel in Tim's hands, for the old sailor was a great navigator, "but how is it you know my name? I don't recognize you."

"I am a reporter on the New York ——, Charles Clark by name."

"Indeed! I have business relations with that paper."

"Yes, and it was in regard to that matter I was coming to see you."

Surprised to hear this, Jack asked him the cause of his call.

"It is easily explained," replied Clark. "My paper knows all about you, and was interested in the Arctic expedition of the Ice King, the crew of which had been dispatched to verify Dr. Hayes' report of having discovered an open polar sea. News having reached us that the Ice King was found wrecked by a whaler, my paper then negotiated with you to get up a relief expedition to rescue the crew of the exploring ship, and you accepted, and was given all the necessary information. Looking over the press copies of the letters, it was seen that the owner of the paper failed to state that he would send a representative to go on the cruise with you. I was assigned to perform that duty, and when I started to join you I found that traffic on the railroad was stopped in consequence of a washout. The newspaper's tug Sea Bird was then dispatched from New York to carry me here by water when she ran on a sunken rock. The crew deserted us in the boat, and but for you we would have perished."

"I expected a newspaper representative," replied Jack; "but as none appeared, it was my intention to keep the terms of my contract by starting for the north to-morrow."

"This, then, is your new invention, the Ocean Plunger, which you said in your letters you would use for the voyage?"

"It is," replied Jack proudly, "and she is the most singular of all the vessels I have ever built. Her model is somewhat on the style of the Russian circular man-of-war, but her arrangement is pretty much the same as that which I have tested on other boats, and found to be perfect. I will show you through her later on, as I see we are now in the bay."

Tim had skillfully steered the vessel through the inlet, and she passed the headland, and made her way across the bay.

It was a beautiful sheet of water, with woods on one side, crags on the other, and the lights of the village gleaming through the gloom at its head, like myriads of stars.

The old sailor steered the boat into a broad, deep creek, and ran it up to the open doors of the workshop, through which she passed into a flooded basin.

Here she was brought to a pause, mooring lines were secured, the machinery was attended to, and every one crossed the gang-plank to an iron platform surrounding the basin.

They passed out a door, crossed the garden, went up on a side piazza, and entered Jack's cozy library.

Here the boy gave the two castaways a cordial invitation to remain at his house, but the captain declined, as he wanted to hire a carriage to take him to New York.

He soon took his departure, but the reporter stayed, as he was to leave Wrightstown with Jack and his friends aboard of the Ocean Plunger the next day.

When he had gone, Jack and his friends had a long talk with the reporter over their plans, and finally retired.

On the following morning the boy was up early, ready for business, and his friends soon joined him.

Clark did not materialize, however.

They waited for him a reasonable length of time, and Jack then went up to his room and knocked upon the door.

No reply was given, and the boy opened the door and peered in.

To his astonishment he saw that the room was very much disordered, the furniture being upset, ornaments broken, the bed covers strewn upon the floor, and everything indicated a struggle.

The bed sheets were spattered with blood, the window opening on the balcony was open, a dagger laid upon the floor, and Clark was not in his room.

It was evident to Jack that there had been foul play in the room during the night, while all were asleep.

CHAPTER III.

THE OCEAN PLUNGER.

Filled with misgivings, Jack hurried over to the window, climbed out upon the roof of the piazza, and seeing a ladder placed up against it from the garden below, he descended into the yard.

Here he observed a number of footprints leading toward the creek, and tracing them to a broad flight of stone stairs leading down to the water, he descended and heard a faint cry.

Peering around the stone embankment, he was startled to see Charley Clark's head protruding from the water. He was gagged.

The reporter's arms were bound behind his back, and he was then tied to a ring-bolt, mortised in the masonry, with his back against the wall. He could not move an inch.

The tide was rapidly rising in the creek.

In five minutes more it would have covered the bound man's head, and he would have been drowned.

Jack was very much astonished.

He hastened over to his boat-house, secured a skiff, and paddling down to the reporter, he drew out his pocket knife, bent over the gunwhale, and cut Clark's bonds.

Hauling him into the boat, Jack relieved him of the gag.

"For heaven's sake, what does this mean?" the boy demanded.

"Wright, you have saved my life again!" exclaimed Clark.

"Has anything serious occurred to you?"

"I am uninjured, save for a knife cut on my arm."

"That's where the blood came from that stained your bed?"

"Yes. It was inflicted by a thief."

"Ah! There were burglars in the house last night, then?"

"Three or them. They got into my room, and one of them tried to stab me, but didn't kill me in the fight that ensued when I awoke. I chased them when they fled, but down here they turned upon me, overpowered me, and tied me here."

"Who were they?"

"Drunken sailors."

"Is that so? Where did they go?"

"Out on the bay, aboard of the whaling ship Phantom."

"I remember her. She put in here yesterday to avoid the storm."

"This happened about four o'clock this morning. At day-break I saw them put out to sea, as the tempest has cleared away."

"Come back to the house. You must be chilled."

They returned to Jack's mansion, and the reporter was then made as comfortable as circumstances would permit.

His wound was not fatal, and when dressed gave him but very little inconvenience.

He went into the village and purchased an outfit of clothing for his voyage, as what he had in a trunk aboard of the tug had been lost with the wreck.

Returning to the workshop, he there found Jack superintending a gang of workmen loading the Ocean Plunger for her coming cruise to the frozen seas.

In broad daylight the boat looked beautiful.

She was about two hundred feet in diameter, and totally unlike anything Jack had ever invented.

The brass work shone like burnished gold, the decks were carefully holystoned, two quarter boats were strapped to racks amidships, and her glasses were highly polished.

Jack Wright had spent a fortune in money and a vast amount of time in constructing this wonder of the deep, and when he saw the reporter, he said to him:

"If you will step this way, Mr. Clark, I will show you the interior arrangements of my boat."

The reporter readily assented.

He crossed the deck and passed into the pilot-house with Jack.

It was a spacious turret, containing a wheel, binnacle and numerous instruments and gauges upon a large switch-board, below which there were a number of levers for controlling the boat.

"One man in this room can work the entire vessel," said Jack, explanatorily. "She is made throughout of the hardest yet lightest known metal, and is worked entirely by electricity, fed from a dynamo directly to the engine. This dynamo is operated by a huge engine, for which those smokestacks are used."

"Is she a submarine boat?" the reporter asked. "She don't seem to be built after the mould universally adopted for such crafts."

"Not a full-fledged submarine vessel," replied Jack, smilingly, "for her deck works would interfere with extensive underwater operations. Yet she can submerge until her smokestacks alone are above the surface, if necessary."

"Please explain to me how you send her under."

"By pulling this lever there is a valve opened in a central water-tight chamber, and a pump pours the sea water into it. She is thus ballasted down to any desired depth by the quantity of water taken in. As soon as a given depth is attained, an automatic machine closes the valve so no more water can enter."

"Quite simple. And to rise to the surface?"

"I merely pull this lever, and the water is pumped out, lightening the boat until her natural buoyancy raises her."

"All these deck rooms and the hold must be water-tight, then?"

"They are."

"But you must have a supply of air?"

"Oh, I carry an air reservoir next to the water chamber, and when we get below the surface, by turning this switch it is put in operation. An injector supplies all parts of the boat with a steady supply, and the air which is used up by breathing is discharged by valves in the roof into the sea."

"An ingenious arrangement," said Clark, enthusiastically.

"I use but one propeller of great size," Jack went on, "and it gives a speed of fifty knots an hour under high voltage. The boat can stand considerable strain if squeezed in the ice, as I have arranged the rim of her decks with pneumatic cushions. The two guns above us are as much for ornament as anything else, yet if it became necessary to use them their destructive power would be ten times greater than that of the ten-inch weapons used in our navy. To attain this effect, you must bear in mind that I use a powder of the highest explosive quality of my own invention, called horrorite."

"Let me see your rooms."

"Follow me," replied Jack, opening a door.

He passed into a small sleeping apartment fitted up as all the rest of the boat was, in the most luxurious style.

It contained a dozen berths, bath, running water and every modern convenience in the best appointed house.

The next room back was a saloon.

It was finished in white and gold, with mahogany floors

tables and chairs, upholstered in the most elegant silk brocades, the panels of the walls being fitted with beveled mirrors, and the branches of gilt chandeliers containing electric lights coming from the ceiling.

A combined kitchen and pantry adjoined it, and a circular flight of richly carpeted stairs led from the saloon down into a magnificent library and card room.

From here a door led into the engine room, where a most elaborate engine of the compound, inverted, direct-acting, surface-condensing kind, was to be seen with two cylinders and sixty inches stroke of piston, while in back of it there stood a large and peculiar-looking dynamo and several pumps.

The walls were netted with white insulated electric wires, that ran to all the working parts and thence into the pilot-house.

From here a trap-door led down into the air reservoir and the water chamber, while at the end of the room stood a large storeroom for provisions and water, and a supply room.

The latter compartment was furnished with many duplicate parts for the boat, peculiar-looking diving suits, various kinds of tools, weapons and miscellany.

No expense had been spared, and every detail was attended to, from mechanical fan wheels to cool the air to electric heat radiators to warm the boat.

The reporter was astounded.

"Wonderful! Wonderful!" he commented when they returned to the deck. "Such lavish expense—such ingenious contrivances! Mr. Wright, you are a wizard!"

Jack laughed quietly.

"It only cost \$250,000," he remarked. "She has enough stores on board to last two years, and is especially equipped for an Arctic voyage. In fact, at five o'clock everything will be in readiness for departure. Our course carries us from here to Cape Race, N. F., thence over to Julianshaab, in Greenland, and along the coast northward into Baffin's Bay. We must then work up through Smith's Sound, Kennedy's Channel, Robeson's Channel, and pass the furthest point north reached by the Greeley expedition."

"If we live to do it," dryly interposed the reporter.

"Our fate is in the hands of Providence," replied Jack solemnly. "When——"

"The devil!" interposed a gruff voice behind him.

Jack and his companion were startled, and glanced around.

Then they burst out laughing, for the speaker was a big green parrot named Bismarck, owned by Fritz, and it had just begun a terrific fight with a little red, howling monkey called Whiskers.

Tim owned the monkey, for during a previous voyage he and the Dutch boy had picked up their two intelligent, trained pets in Africa.

CHAPTER IV.

TRACKING THE THIEVES.

Late in the afternoon Jack and his three companions, the monkey and the parrot, embarked on the Ocean Plunger, and as soon as the Dutch boy had examined the machinery the boy inventor started his boat.

She ran down the creek into the bay, when, to the surprise of her crew, they saw that many of the inhabitants of the town had come thronging down to the water's edge to wish them good-by.

Their destination was an open secret, for it was published in all the newspapers that Jack Wright had been employed by a noted newspaper to go to the rescue of an exploring ship called the Ice King, that was wrecked in the far north, and completing its purpose.

A tremendous cheer pealed from every lip when the graceful vessel was seen flying out on the bay, with the stars and stripes flying from her flag-pole.

"Hello! Here's a send-off, boys!" exclaimed Jack.

"Lord save us, le' me fire a battery in salute," said Tim.

"Go ahead, old fellow. Fritz, dip the flag."

"Donner vetter! I didn'd vos oxbect dot surprises alretty," replied the grinning fat boy, as he went out with Tim.

A few moments afterward a tremendous report roared from the gun, and the starry flag saluted the people.

Cheer after cheer for Jack Wright was given with a will, and they saw myriads of handkerchiefs waved, and heard the fervent Godspeed of their friends.

Straight across the bay shot the circular boat with the spray flying upon her deck, her great screw leaving a white, foamy wake in back of her, and she reached the opening in the headland and passed through.

In the choppy waves of the ocean she was soon lost to the view of the people of Wrightstown, and the boy then changed her course for the northward.

Two great clouds of black smoke streamed from the smoke-stacks, but not a sound or throb came from the engine, and the log indicator on the board announced forty knots per hour.

How is it you don't carry stokers for your furnace?" asked the reporter presently.

"Because we don't use furnaces," replied Jack. "That smoke comes from petroleum oil. We have only to light the jets and everything is ready."

"Don't it consume a large quantity of the oil?"

"No. Ten casks will last a year."

"That's an economical engine."

"Economy is one of the main factors of these boats."

Tim had stationed himself on lookout at the knighthood, and Fritz busied himself about the deck, putting everything in ship-shape order.

The boat made rapid headway, as there was a calm sea, and but very little wind, and several days passed by.

Upon passing St. Johns, the young inventor changed her course, heading for the south of Greenland.

On the first day out from land icebergs were sighted, but they were so far away to the northward that but very little attention was paid to them.

It was at the time of the annual break-up of the polar ice, when the arctic glaciers glide down from the mountain heights into the sea, carrying on their surface as well as in their interior massive fragments of rock, gravel and dirt.

In this manner the banks of New Foundland were formed.

Every year the freezing currents flowing from Baffin's Bay rushed southward with their freight of ice, and meeting the hot waters of the Gulf Stream, the ice melts and the debris they carry falls to the bottom.

A ridge 10,000 feet high has thus been formed in past ages across the Atlantic, the influence of polar ice fields being so great as to modify in course of time the form of the earth's surface.

Toward nightfall there came a cry from Tim of:

"Sail ho! Sail ho!"

"Where away?" queried Jack from the pilot-house.

"About four points off our weather quarter."

"What do you make them out to be, Tim?"

"Harpoon hunters o' ther Arctic."

"Greenland whalers?"

"Aye, aye! And a dozen in ther fleet, lad."

"I'll bear down upon them."

"Have you any special object in view, Jack?" queried Clark.

"Yes; I want to see if the Phantom is among them."

"Oh! The vessel from which the sailors came who robbed me?"

"Yes, and if I meet them they shall pay for it dearly."

"The rascals got away with my diamond ring and watch, but I saved my money by having my purse under my pillow."

"Would you recognize the miscreants if you met them?"

"Very easily."

"Good! They must be bad men."

"It might be that they were impelled by drink to commit the crime, during a run on shore," suggested Clark leniently.

"Perhaps. 'Rum in, wits out,' though, as they say," Jack replied. "A man shows the strong points in his nature when three sheets in the wind. We are overhauling the fleet. See?"

"Very rapidly. They haven't got much of a breeze, I notice."

On forged the Ocean Plunger, swiftly overtaking the white-winged fleet ahead of her, and they soon observed the whalers looking back and pointing at the electric boat.

Jack got out his night glass, and carefully scanned the names on the sterns of the different boats, until they reached the last one.

"Ship ahoy!" came a hail from the whaler.

"Ahoy!" replied Jack.

"Whar yer bound?"

"Baffin's Bay. Is the Phantom in this fleet?"

"Aye—she's ther leader athwart our course thar."

"Thank you; I wish to board her on business."

Jack saw the foremost vessel half a mile in advance.

She was a majestic craft of two thousand tons burden, of modern build, and very swift and handsome.

He steered the Ocean Plunger after her, and in due time ran up alongside, when he saw that she was his prey.

"Phantom ahoy!" cried the boy, steering over to her.

"Ahoy there," replied the captain at the bulwark.

"Luff up—I want to board you on business, sir."

"Aye, aye! Hard aport! Hard aport!"

Jack put the wheel in Tim's hands, and going out on deck as the Phantom ran up into the wind's eye with fluttering sails, the boy waited until the Plunger ran up close to the other, and, followed by Clark, ascended an accommodation ladder and reached the ship's deck.

The captain met him at the gangway.

"Anything I kin do fur ye?" he gruffly queried in some surprise.

"Three of your crew broke into my house at Wrightstown."

"Wot!" roared the skipper, with a scowl.

"They robbed and stabbed this man, and when he followed them, they tied him hand and foot in the creek, trying to drown him."

"You lie, youngster!"

"Sir!" exclaimed Jack hotly, and his eyes began to flash.

"Hold on, Jack!" interposed Clark, grasping the boy's arm.

"But this insult——"

"Pay no heed to it."

"Why not?"

"Because the captain himself was one of the thieves."

Jack gave a violent start, and the captain turned pale at this unexpected denouncement: but Clark spoke in the positive tones of conviction, and there could be no mistake.

"By thunder!" ejaculated the amazed boy, recovering himself.

"I'll swear to it!" exclaimed the reporter firmly.

"Blast yer, wot d'yer mean by a-bringin' sich charges agin me?" yelled the scowling captain, in a paroxysm of rage.

"It is true!" cried Clark ringingly.

"You lie! You lie!"

"And there is the proof! He wears my ring and watch!" shouted Clark, pointing at the captain's ornaments.

The whaler gave a guilty start.

He saw that he could not refute this proof of his criminality.

For a moment a deathly silence prevailed among the crew on deck, who had been standing around taking everything in.

By an effort the captain recovered himself.

"What has brung youse here after me, anyway?" he hissed.

"To recover that stolen property, and punish the thief!" Jack answered.

"Which is the ekal to a threat agin me, hey?"

"Exactly!" was the boy's quiet reply.

"Theif here's my answer!" yelled the rascally captain. "Hold up yer hands, or, by gosh, I'll drop yer both!"

As quick as a flash he drew a brace of pistols from the belt under his coat, and aimed at Jack and the reporter.

But the boy was equally as quick, for he had a pistol out at the same juncture, and covered the captain with a steady aim.

CHAPTER V.

THE SHIP ON FIRE.

Like two statues stood Jack and the captain of the Phantom aiming their revolvers at each other for several minutes.

Every one of the crew recoiled in fear of getting shot.

Jack saw that the whaler meant to fire at him.

In order to forestall him, the boy shot the captain.

There came a flash, a report, and a yell of pain, for the bullet from the boy's weapon had lodged in the captain's arm.

He dropped his revolvers to the deck, and reeled back, clapping his hand to the wound.

"I'm shot!" he screamed.

"Clark, recover your valuables," said Jack.

"All right!" the reporter answered.

Jack sprang at the wounded captain, grasped him by the throat with one hand, and pressed the pistol against his head.

"Don't you move an inch, or I'll shoot you!" he cried.

"Mercy!" whined the captain, in trembling accents. "Spare me!"

"Take your jewelry, Clark," said the boy.

The reporter recovered his watch and ring, and Jack then gave the terrified captain a sling that sent him sprawling.

"Oh!" he yelled, "don't kill me."

"I will spare you, since we have recovered the stolen property," the boy answered. "You deserve punishment for so disgracing your honorable profession as to turn thief. It is evident that you are naturally a bad man, for only a wicked person would stoop to commit robbery. Let this be a lesson to you."

The boy turned away with Clark, and returned to the Ocean Plunger.

As the boy's boat glided away, the captain appeared at the bulwark and shook his clenched fist at the young inventor.

"Curse you! I'll get even for the wound you gave me!" he hissed. "We will meet again. Then beware of me!"

Jack was deeply impressed by these prophetic words.

He felt instinctively that they were true, and it made him uneasy.

"Captain Philip Bangs is a bad man," remarked the boy, using the name he heard one of the sailors apply to the whaler, "and if ever he gets a chance it is likely he will try to avenge the shot I gave him, Clark."

"I wouldn't be surprised if he did," acquiesced the reporter, with a nod and a troubled look. "However, I'm glad we got the best of him. It is very evident that intoxication

alone did not prompt the rascal to break into your house with two of his men and rob me. He must be a villain at heart."

"Ach! Why I vosn'd along mit yer?" groaned Fritz, regretfully. "Id vould haf been yust so good as a skvare meal if I could his het haf proke. Shack, id's awful vhen I tink I didn't vos haf a fight now mit somepody but Dim in tree monts."

And regretfully shaking his head, the fat boy waddled up forward and went on lookout, while Jack and his companion remained where they were discussing what had transpired.

The Ocean Plunger soon ran ahead of the fleet, and left the harpoon hunters hull down astern in the gloom of night.

An hour afterwards Fritz prepared supper for them, and when it was finished Jack and the reporter played a game of cards.

A mournful dirge was played among the rigging by the wind, and the waves grew choppy and restless.

Jack went up into the pilot-house with the reporter.

"Any news, Tim?" he asked, glancing at the barometer.

"Nuthin' but a field o' driftin' ice off ter ther starboard," the old sailor replied, as he idly swung the spokes of the wheel.

"Have you noticed the barometer?"

"Not in an hour."

"Well, the mercury has fallen half an inch."

"Wot!"

Such a tremendous drop as that portended a big storm, and Tim glanced at the gauge in undisguised astonishment.

"Give me the wheel. You had better go out on deck and see that everything is trim and taut for the coming gale."

"Aye, lad!" replied Tim, hastening out on deck to comply.

Jack now pulled one of the levers, and the searchlight shot its rays far ahead over the murky sea.

Everything in its light was illumined as if by day.

The boy played it over the dancing waves in all directions and brought it to a pause upon a drifting ice floe that sparkled and flashed in the water with the brilliancy of myriads of diamonds.

When the boat passed it Jack shut off the light.

Fritz and Tim were working like beavers.

They secured everything on deck with lashings, and the Dutch boy came in, leaving Tim on lookout.

"Eferyding vhas retty now," announced Fritz. "Dot storm can coom now so hardt as nefer vas und don't could do us some harms, as ve lash eferyding fast vonct."

"A gale of vind in this sea is worse than a cyclone on the ocean," remarked Jack. "I don't think we will catch it for some time yet unless a squall bursts."

"I tink so neider," assented Fritz.

Just then Tim sang out:

"Lights athwart our course, Jack."

"What is it?"

"A ship, I reckon."

Jack saw the ruddy glow alluded to afar in the distance, but the boy saw that it did not come from a ship's lantern.

It was too large and brilliant for that.

Of course a light would be magnified in such gloom, but the boy was not to be deceived, and viewed it with his glass.

Long and earnestly he watched the light, and as the Ocean Plunger drew closer to it a cry of alarm escaped his lips.

"Good heaven, boys, it's a ship on fire!" he cried.

Every one was thrilled by Jack's remark, and eagerly scanned the dull red glow ahead, which was rapidly drawing nearer.

It soon became apparent that Jack's conclusion was right, for the magnitude of the light increased the nearer they got to it, until at last they saw the flames shooting skyward.

The boy put full speed on the boat.

"Unless the crew of yonder ill-fated craft are succored

before the storm bursts upon them they may perish," he cried, as he steered his boat straight for the burning vessel.

Away dashed the Ocean Plunger like a racehorse, and rapidly bearing down upon the ill-starred ship, they saw that she was a large vessel entirely wrapped in flames.

The sails were blazing aloft, fiery streaks were running up the tarred cordage, and great flames were shooting up from the pitchy decks, arousing a vast cloud of smoke.

In the vivid glare they saw the unfortunate crew working like madmen to launch their boats.

Some of them were already filled and afloat, while the heaving sea was dotted with the heads of swimmers who had jumped overboard to escape the ravaging fire.

By this time the Ocean Plunger was but a quarter of a mile from the imperiled crew, and every one was eagerly watching the unfortunates and planning to do something for their relief when they arrived near enough to act.

"All ready now!" shouted Jack ringingly. "Stand by to pick up the boats. Hawsers ready, Tim. Come in here, Fritz."

But just then there sounded a terrific crash astern of the Ocean Plunger, and her wheel stopped revolving.

The shock almost flung every one over, but as quick as lightning Jack realized that an accident had happened to the screw, and to save the machinery from breakage he stopped it.

As soon as it came to a pause, the boy rushed out.

Hurrying aft, and peering over the taffrail, he saw that the wheel had caught the broken spar of some vessel which had been drifting in the water.

The log was caught in such a manner that it wedged the propeller, preventing its revolutions, and stopped all further progress of the boy's boat.

Jack had scarcely made this discovery when the gale broke.

With a roar like an angry lion, the wind swept down upon them and kicked up a heavy swell.

The Ocean Plunger was beaten down in the sea, with great masses of spray breaking over her.

She was unable to do anything for the unfortunates on the burning ship, and utterly at the mercy of the storm, unless the spar could be hauled out.

Jack was thrilled with dismay.

Their position now was equally perilous as that of the crew they had come to rescue, and they soon felt it when the billows rose as the gale augmented and drove them along.

Rushing back to his friends, the boy explained the cause of the trouble, and then said:

"Unless we dislodge the spar, the seas may batter the boat to pieces. Tim, take the wheel, and keep the Plunger before the gale. Clark—Fritz, come aft with me. Our lives and the salvation of the boat depend upon us getting rid of that log as soon as possible."

Alarmed over their situation, the fat boy and the reporter ran after Jack across the tossing deck.

CHAPTER VI.

CLINGING TO A LOG.

The light of the burning ship lit up the dreadful scene with dazzling brilliancy, and the glaring rays of the searchlight on the Ocean Plunger flashed out on the stormy sea.

Observing this plain beacon, the boat's crew came rowing toward Jack's vessel, and our friends made a most desperate effort to dislodge the spar that held the screw.

It was impossible to do so, and they finally desisted.

"Thar's no use a-tryin'," groaned Tim. "We can't budge it."

"Vot ve can apoud it do, den?" cried Fritz, shouting to make his voice heard.

"There's but one way out of the difficulty," shouted Jack.

"Well—an' wot's that?"

"I'll have to saw the log in two."

"Shiminey Christmas—how could you dot do?"

"Put on a diving suit, lower the boat out of influence of the surface of the waves, and then descend over the stern and work."

With this arrangement they all went inside.

Here Jack put on a diving suit of his own invention, made of rubber-coated felt an inch thick, with an aluminum helmet having three plate glass visors in it.

The head gear was surmounted by an electric lamp, and connected by wires and tubes with a knapsack on the back made of metal, which contained an electric battery, and a reservoir filled with enough compressed air to last five hours.

He carried several weapons in his belt, and a rubber bag slung over his shoulder containing some tools.

As soon as everything was in readiness Jack went out on deck, and seeing the ship's quarter boats rising and falling in the turbulent sea, he cried to Tim:

"Stand by to fling a rope to yonder unfortunates."

"Aye, aye, lad," replied the Dutch Boy.

"Clark, I need your assistance while I work."

"Go on, and I'll follow with this accommodation ladder."

Jack screwed the visor of his helmet shut, turned a screw which put the injector in operation, filling his helmet with air from the knapsack, and seeing that his weights were properly adjusted to his soles and breastplate, the boy strode aft.

It was now impossible to submerge the boat, as Jack had at first intended, as they had to wait for the approaching boats to reach them, so the boy made the best of it.

Clark fastened the accommodation ladder to the taffrail, and steadying it, Jack climbed over and went down in the sea.

He sent the light blazing from his helmet lamp by turning a thumb-screw on his suit which made a circuit between the battery and the carbons, and a broad beam shot from the bull's-eye, cut through the water like a knife, and illumined the sea for some distance around under the water.

The ladder swayed with the surging water, but as Jack descended below the surface this motion decreased.

Down he went ten feet.

Here he paused.

In front of him he saw the motionless propeller.

It was enormous in size, and the shaft worked in ball bearings, while below it hung a long, narrow rudder.

Between the axis of the propeller and the end of the keel there was wedged a huge, thick spar, so firmly caught between two of the leaves of the screw that it could not revolve an inch.

"If I had not stopped the machinery immediately after feeling the shock," muttered Jack, "the blades of the screw would certainly have been broken."

He examined the obstruction carefully.

In order to get it out, he would have to cut the log squarely in two, so he drew himself over to the screw by grasping one of its blades, and letting go the ladder, he got astride of the shaft and got out his saw.

The helmet lamp gave him plenty of light by which to see to work, and the boat was rolling and pitching in the wild seas at a furious rate that sometimes bared the screw and left the boy exposed from the water.

He set to work upon the log, and during one of the moments when he was out of water, he flashed a quick glance over the tumbling sea, and saw that the quarter boats from the burning ship were close to the Ocean Plunger.

It was evident that his friends would save them after all, and he applied himself vigorously to his work.

The task was very difficult, as it was hard to work the saw under water, and the constant heaving of the boat seriously interfered with the steadiness of his movements.

The boy finally got astride of the spar to work better, and thus managed to cut the log half in two, when the boat gave a sudden lurch.

His weight on the spar snapped it in two.

The next moment the severed spar floated surfaceward, the piece Jack bestrode carrying him with it.

In a moment more the boy reached the surface, some distance away from the boat, clinging to the spar, for had he been dislodged, his leaden weights would have carried him to the bottom.

Unfortunately he had neglected to make his body fast to the Plunger by a line, and now he was cast off at the mercy of the storm with only the frail support of his strength to depend upon.

The boy was drifted and hurled far away from his boat, unable to call for help with his visors closed up, and the noise of the storm roaring so loudly around him that any outcry he might have made would have been smothered.

His helmet lamp was blazing brightly, however, and as he was dashed upon the crest of a billow, Clark saw it.

Realizing at once what happened, the reporter rushed up to the pilot-house to apprise Tim and Fritz.

Meantime the storm carried Jack further and further away from his boat, and the heavy seas taxed his strength.

"I may have to let go the log," he muttered, "or a billow may wash me off. I'd better be prepared for it."

And with this wise forethought, he lifted one foot at a time, and while clinging to the log with one hand, he unstrapped his shoe weights, and let them sink.

This was hardly done, when an enormous billow curled up like a mountain over him, hissing and roaring, and then burst like the heavy surf on a seashore.

Down came tons upon tons of water upon the young inventor, and tearing him from the log ere he could abandon his breast and back weights, it swept him away like a mere whisp of straw in the boiling and rumbling chaldron of tempestuous waters.

For a moment Jack was bewildered.

He recovered himself by a violent effort, however, and soon realized that everything was quiet around him.

This was due to the fact that he was under water.

He was swiftly sinking.

The weights he yet had on were carrying him down, and a thrill of horror passed over him as he realized that he would perish if he were carried to the bottom.

To get off his breast and back weights was his only salvation, he knew very well, and as his body went shooting downward, he rapidly began to unbuckle them.

It was fortunate that Jack had not opened his visor and had relieved himself of his shoe weights ere he was washed from the spar, else he might have been drowned.

He had attained a depth of nearly two hundred feet before he finally succeeded in getting rid of his weights.

Letting them drop, the boy found his descent suddenly checked, for the buoyant knapsack strapped to his back held up his body, and now began to carry him up to the surface.

He was shot surfaceward faster than he went down, and presently floated on top of the sea like a cork.

As soon as Jack recovered his faculties, he swept a keen glance around upon the dark sea.

He was bounced around like a cork by the shrieking gale and tumbling waves, and soon saw the glaring searchlight upon the Ocean Plunger.

She was moving along, now that her propeller was freed of the log, and judging by the manner in which her searchlight was flashed around, Jack saw that his friends were intently searching for him.

The boat was quarter of a mile away, but her many brilliant electric lights showed Jack that her deck was thronged with sailors, who must have been the crew of the burning ship whom they had started to rescue.

Jack's helmet lamp had gone out.

The heavy waves had snapped its battery wire in two, and without this beacon to guide them, it seemed impossible for his friends to locate him in that dark waste of raging waters.

Moreover, Jack saw that his boat was going away from the place where he then floated.

CHAPTER VII.

"THERE BLOWS."

"Help! Help!"

This appeal rang out faintly above the noise of the storm half an hour afterwards in Jack's voice.

He saw the Ocean Plunger near by, and by keeping up a loud and continual outcry, he finally attracted the attention of his friends, for they stopped the boat.

The searchlight was swept around in circles, and finally slanted down upon the boy's floating body.

He had opened the visor of his helmet and shut off the emission of air from his knapsack, in order to insure his buoyancy.

His friends kept the light wavering upon him, and then he observed the boat come plunging towards the place where he floated, tossing about like a cork.

In a short time the boat reached him.

"Jack ahoy!" yelled Tim from the deck.

"Ahoy!" replied the young inventor.

"Catch this rope!"

"Let it come!"

Whiz! shot a coil of manilla line over the intervening space, unwinding as it came along, and falling in the water near the boy, he caught hold of it.

"Haul away!" he shouted.

Several of the rescued sailors assisted Tim, and they pulled the boy from the water upon the deck of the Plunger, panting and exhausted.

"Safe!" roared Tim. "Keel haul me if I s'posed as we'd pick ye up alive. Hurrah, boys—hurrah!"

The other sailors cheered lustily.

"These are ther lubbers wot came from ther burnin' whaler," introduced Tim. "Thar wuzn't a soul on 'em lost, neither, as we've picked up ther hull crew."

"I am glad to hear that," said the boy, in pleased tones. "But come inside, friends. Although this boat was built in this shape so she could not capsize, and to prevent heavy waves from breaking over her, there is no use in remaining out here now."

They passed inside.

Fritz held the wheel.

Divesting himself of his diving suit, Jack returned to the cabin, and there was accosted by the captain of the burnt ship, with the feeling remark:

"Mr. Wright, may God bless you, for you've saved our lives."

"It is a pleasure to me to do it, Captain er——"

"Sam Steady, at your service."

"Well, Captain Steady, you've lost your ship, I see."

"Aye, and a valuable cargo of whale oil with it, which I spent two full years collecting in these seas."

"How unfortunate. Tell me how it happened."

"A lamp exploded down in the hold and set the oil afire. There was no saving the ship after that."

"Lordy, no!" said Tim, who stood by, listening intently.

"You probably know how inflammable whale oil is."

"Waal, I reckon I oughter, bein' as I've sarved my time aboard o' ther ole whale ship Sairy Ann," proudly replied Tim. "An' after that I oughter know a thing or two. Why, Lord bless yer, sir, I remember well one time as we wuz a-sailin' off Disco Islan', when up came a big Greenland whale right—oh, goin', Jack?"

"Yes," significantly said the boy, hastening away.

He knew that Tim was manufacturing a whopper, and wanted to escape the torture of hearing it.

The saved captain was interested in the narrative of a story concerning his own business, and asked:

"Well, as you was saying, friend?"

Tim turned to him with a grin, and a sparkle in his eye.

"Ther boats wuz lowered," said he, "an' without waitin' ter put out my pipe, I took up my persition in one o' ther boats, an' away we wuz rowed for ther whale. The wind wuz blowin' hard, an' night settled down so dark afore we reached the spouter, yer couldn't see yer hand afore yer face. We thought we'd lose our prize in ther gloom, an' all on us felt down-hearted."

"Too bad," sympathetically said the captain.

"Aye, but listen! Jest as we felt the worstest, up sprung ther wind and blowed ther sparks out o' my pipe. One on 'em landed plum on ther whale, an' in a minute there flared up a terrible blaze——"

"A blaze?" echoed the captain, in surprise.

"That's wot I sed. Yer see, ther spark lit ther ile in ther whale, an' thar she blazed like a volcaner. Ther sea wuz lit up fer miles. Our hopes come back. We rowed up ter ther blazin' whale an' killed it, an'——"

"Hold on!" gasped the captain, his eyes bulging.

"Wot now, sir?" queried Tim.

"I've heard enough."

"Oh, but ther best part——"

"Don't carry it too far. I can't stand any more."

"D'ye mean ter insinuate as yer doubt my yarn?"

"I don't insinuate anything. I know you are lying."

"Gosh a'mighty! D'yer——"

But the captain fled, and heard no more, leaving Tim to grumble away to himself over the contemptible meanness and thankless ingratitude of some of the people one meets in this world.

The captain returned to the pilot-house, where he found Jack in control of the boat, and laughingly repeated Tim's yarn.

"Look out for him," laughed Jack. "He's the ablest seaman, truest-hearted, and bravest man on the sea, but his imagination stretches like rubber, and his inventive faculty is marvelous."

"Does the propeller work well now?"

"Just as good as ever. How many men have you?"

"There are twenty, all told. But we cannot remain here."

"When the storm blows over, we will transfer you to the first homeward-bound craft we fall in with."

"Splendid! I could not ask for anything better."

The tempest had come to stay, however, for three days passed by before it showed any signs of abating.

Upon the first clear day Jack took an observation with his nautical instruments, and found that they had been carried many leagues to the northwest of their course.

The sailors had been quartered as comfortably as possible, and gladly assisted in doing duty with Jack's friends.

When the storm was gone, and the wind and waves calmed down, the young inventor steered his vessel toward the Greenland coast again.

It was late in the afternoon before the welcome cry of "Land ho! Land ho!" reached their ears from the lookout.

It was only a dim and distant speck, and it had hardly been sighted between a number of drifting icebergs, when Tim suddenly yelled:

"Thar blows! Thar blows!"

It was the whaler's warning of the presence of a leviathan, and so accustomed to it were the rescued crew that they were at once electrified and eagerly scanned the sea on all sides.

A league away, among the majestic bergs, lay a number of enormous dark bodies on the sea.

They were magnificent specimens of the Greenland whale, and were spouting great vapory jets as they idly basked in the afternoon sun.

It excited the whalers to see them, and as Jack came out on deck, he heard many of them express a regret that they were unable to attack the whales.

As soon as Jack inspected them, he turned to his crew, and pointing at his two quarter boats, he said:

"Launch those boats, boys!"

"Aye, aye, sir!" came the cheery reply.

"I have got a whaling outfit among my stores, and as I would enjoy the sport of such royal game in the company of such experienced hands as you are, I will take one boat and your captain the other. We shall have a hunt."

The delighted harpoon hunters uttered a wild cheer, and the necessary articles were procured from the storeroom, placed in the boats, and the crews were appointed.

Fritz was put in charge of the Plunger, and, leaving him, Tim and Clark on board, both boats were rowed away.

The whales were in a large open space between the bergs, and the boats were pulled swiftly toward them.

Not half the distance had been covered, however, when out from behind the nearest berg glided two more boats filled with whalers, who came from a large ship that had been hauled to behind the berg, where it lay hidden.

The whales were midway between the two crews, and according to the rule, the prey belonged to the first boat that reached the whales and flung the harpoon at them.

Both parties realized this at once.

In an instant a race for the whales began between them, and a scene of intense excitement ensued.

CHAPTER VIII.

A WHALE HUNT.

"Give way with a will, there, boys!" cried Jack, to his crew of stalwart whalers. "Bend your backs to it, and make the boat hum, or those fellows will get in their hooks ahead of us."

"Aye, aye, sir!" came the cheery reply.

Swish—swish! Swish—swish! hissed the oars.

They fairly bent double under the powerful strokes of the powerful muscles, and with the spray flying up at the bow and the water curling at the stern of the quarter boat, they dashed across the brine, with Jack standing in the bow.

He had a tub and line before him, and poised a long, slender harpoon in his hand to dart at the nearest whale.

His eagle eyes saw the rival boats gaining, and he frowned with annoyance, and turned to his men again:

"This won't do!" he cried. "'We are losing. We are going at a snail's pace. Let her rip! Faster, boys, faster! Confound it, can't you do any better than that?"

The men rowed harder.

Soon Jack's boat began to creep up.

She was rapidly gaining on the other.

Presently she came in long range of the great bull-whale, and the boy shouted:

"Haul to! Back water!"

"Aye, aye, sir!" came the reply, as the boat stopped.

Whiz! went the iron the next moment, and flying through the air like a rocket, it reached the whale.

Deep into the blubber sank the iron, and there came a conclusive throe of the mighty carcass.

"All hands astern!" yelled the boat steerer.

Back shot the boat.

At the same moment the rest of the herd took fright and sounded, and the chagrined crew of the other boat gave vent to their feelings in the strongest terms of intense rage.

The whale was soon in a fury.

It was an eighty barrel whale, and a rich prize to lose.

The harpoon had been buried in back of his hump, and as soon as the monster recovered from the shock it darted off like the wind, paying out the harpoon line very swiftly.

A scream arose from the wheel over which it ran in the bow from the tub, and Jack was forced to dash water upon the smoking pivots to prevent the friction setting them afire.

As soon as the line was all out there came a tug at the boat which spun her around, and hurled Jack in the water.

He arose, and grasped the gunwale a minute afterward, just as the whale towed the boat along dead to windward at the rate of fifteen knots an hour against a head sea.

Many willing hands grasped the drenched boy and pulled him into the boat, just as it shot swiftly away.

"All right?" the steerer asked anxiously.

"All right," cheerily answered the boy.

"Get up in the bow—we're off!"

The water was flying over the bows now, and leaped up with such force that the boat seemed to be plowing through it, raising a high bank of surf on each side of it.

Jack picked up a long, keen lance, and, hauling in on the harpoon line, he drew the boat close enough to the whale to begin plunging his weapon into it.

It had no effect, however.

Just then they came abreast of the captain's boat.

"Take us along!" he shouted.

"Fling your line!" came Jack's steerer's reply.

A stout rope was shot from one boat to the other, and when the short warp was caught both boats were towed along.

Fritz saw the boats being carried away, and beat the Plunger up in the quarter they had taken to keep them in sight.

It was within an hour of sundown, and the weather had every appearance of an ugly night coming on, as the wind began to freshen and the sea grew more troubled in look.

The whale cut and thrashed with his flukes, rounded up, and paused.

Up went Jack's lance again, and the boat steerer laid his boat square onto the whale, but despite Jack's efforts the monster would head for the boat, and prevented him getting a chance to lance it in a vital spot.

"The lubber seems to know just what I want to do," exclaimed Jack, "and is using every effort to baffle me."

The men laughed.

Pulling up to the bull they gave Jack a chance to get in his iron again, and the whale spouted thin blood.

A moment afterwards the creature settled low in the water, and the boy kept a keen watch for it, expecting it would break water near the head of the boat.

Presently he observed it whiten under the brine, and get

his lance ready again, when there suddenly came a crash and Jack went flying up into the air.

The whale had come up under the bow of the boat, giving it a terrific knock that sent it sailing skyward.

Fortunately all the crew could swim, for the boat was completely capsized and the oars spilled out.

The whale was then floating five fathoms away, and lay beating the water with blows like thunder with its tail, which churned the brine into foam and agitated the waves.

"Save the oars!" shouted Jack.

The swimmers all seized them as fast as they could, and then made for the boat, which Jack had already reached.

The boat was uninjured.

The captain's boat had been cut free from her.

They righted her with extreme difficulty, and finally got in again.

In the meantime, the whale had been sounding, and when the end of the harpoon line was reached, he ran along under the sea, carrying along the boat half buried.

The water was stained crimson.

As the captain's boat was met, he let a second harpoon fly that sunk deep into the whale's blubber, and brought him to a pause, beating the water wildly.

The great monster swam around and around in circles, its body all sunk but the head, and reaching the captain's boat, it rushed straight toward it with open jaws.

The bull let its jaws fly back, striking the boat in the bow, and smashing a hole in her timbers.

"Stern all!" yelled the captain.

"Stern!" echoed the men, obeying with alacrity.

"Got a jacket, Browning? She's filling."

"Aye, aye, sir!" replied the mate.

"Then stop up that hole."

The mate complied, and prevented the boat from filling, whereupon they pulled up to the monster again.

Jack had his lance in operation by this time, and when the captain got on the other side and began to lance the whale, the struggles of the creature were fearful to see.

It started ahead upon the surface, dragging the two boats along after it, and away they sped at twelve knots, making every effort to kill it.

These creatures cling tenaciously to life.

Indeed, the one they were attacking was an extraordinary strong beast, and fought with wonderful strength to get away from its captors.

In this it was unsuccessful, however.

It lay broadside to Jack's boat, and the boy, with one well-directed lunge, put an end to its life, and it lay with fins out.

A cheer pealed from the sailors.

"Well done! Well done!" cried Captain Steady, admiringly.

"He was a tough old customer!" grimly answered the boy.

"Aye, but you've done for him like an expert."

"Here comes the Ocean Plunger!"

"What are you going to do with the whale?"

"Give the carcass to the crew of yonder vessel."

The Plunger soon reached them, and making the harpoon line fast to her, Jack had his boats hauled up on deck, and sent his boat off, towing along the dead whale.

They soon hove up to the disappointed whaler, and hailing her disgusted captain, Jack asked him:

"Do you want this whale?"

"Why? Don't you want it?" was the surprised reply.

"No," answered the boy. "I was not harpoon hunting."

"Do you mean to say you only did this for sport?"

"Exactly."

"Then I'll gladly accept the whale."

"Are you going home soon?"

"I only need this whale to fill my barrels with oil."

"Then would you mind taking the shipwrecked crew of a lost whaler back to port with you?"

"I'll do it gladly."

"Thank you. We will send them aboard."

Captain Steady and his men were glad to avail themselves of this chance, and bidding Jack and his friends good-by they left the Plunger.

The whale was then turned over to the crew of the other craft, and the Plunger went on to the northward.

CHAPTER IX.

AFTER SEALSKINS.

"Shiminey Christmas! Vot's der medder mit der sea?"

It was Fritz who uttered this startled exclamation two days later, as the Ocean Plunger was running along the coast of Greenland.

Jack emerged from the deck-house, attracted by the fat boy's cry, and walked over to the rail, where he joined Fritz.

Fritz was glaring down at the sea ahead of them.

"What's the matter now?" questioned Jack uneasily.

"Looker dot vater!" replied the Dutch boy, pointing downward.

The surface of the sea was patched with great masses of an olive-colored substance, lending it a singular appearance.

Jack studied it closely awhile, and then a smile broke over his face as the truth dawned upon his mind.

"Why, don't you know what that is?" he asked.

"Nein."

"It is called sea blubber by whalers."

"Ach! I don't know more now as I did before."

"It is right-whale feed."

"Vhy you blainer don't vhas spoken?"

"It's a little red shrimp. You can imagine what a prodigious quantity is necessary to gratify the appetite of a whale."

"You vas mean to say, den, vhales only eads dem small tings?"

"Of course."

Fritz whistled his amazement.

Just then Clark came out on deck, leaving Tim at the wheel, and was shown the whale food.

"About where are we located now?" he queried.

"Two leagues off Cape Micklesham, on Cumberland Island," Jack replied.

"But our course lies along the Greenland shore."

"I intend to cross over at Godthaab," replied the boy.

"Perhaps it would be a good plan to stop at Disco Island."

"Just my plan; we may hear there some news of the Ice King."

"Don't your instructions from the newspaper owner read so?"

"Yes," assented Jack. It was calculated that the exploring party stopped at Disco on the ship's course northward, and that if any of the ill-fated crew were saved, they would very likely try to get there on the way back in order to wait for some whaler to carry them back to civilization."

"Vot de last ouf dem lost men vas heard alretty?" asked Fritz.

"They had pushed on to Cape Joseph Henry, near the furthest northing made by Captain Nares in 1875," replied Clark, "and there they were nipped by the ice, and the ship was crushed. The crew disappeared. A whaler ran across the wreck, and reported it upon his return to America. Con-

vinced that the crew of the ill-fated craft are yet alive and in need of aid, it is determined that if you can do anything to relieve or rescue them, you shall do it."

They had a hopeless task ahead of them, but Jack made up his mind that he would strain every nerve to find that lost crew, if they were yet alive.

Several icebergs were now discerned ahead, and the round boat rushed through the icy water toward them.

Every one was now clad in sealskin clothing, as the thermometer registered 25 degrees below zero.

Upon a nearer approach to the great bergs, Jack leveled a spy-glass at the nearest one, and saw that the edge was lined with seals, who were basking in the sun.

"We may need more furs than we have got on," remarked Jack, "for the further northward we go the colder the weather will get. Suppose we run over to the berg and capture some of those animals? What say you, Tim?"

"Aye, now, I wuz just a-goin' ter mention it myself," the old sailor replied eagerly, although he did not dream of it before.

"Then you and Fritz can launch one of the boats, and we will stop the Plunger here and leave her in Clark's care."

The reporter was satisfied.

Going down into the arsenal, Jack procured three rifles, and a knife and pistol for each.

By the time everything was in readiness the boat was launched, and the three embarked for the hunt, Jack seated in the stern sheets managing the rudder lines, and Tim and Fritz working the oars.

The Plunger had been brought to a pause and left where she was, Clark standing out on deck watching them.

"Give way, boys!" ordered Jack.

Down went the oars into the water, and rowing with the precision of clockwork, the two oarsmen sent the skiff flying through the water toward the berg.

It was the same boat that the whale had broken, but Tim had repaired it, as he was a good carpenter.

Within a few minutes the boat reached the berg at a spot where no seals lay, and Jack leaped ashore, secured the painter to an icy projection, and his friends disembarked.

Under the boy's lead they passed around the base of the enormous berg and came upon half a dozen of the seals.

They lay upon a small plateau, and were basking and quiet when the three raised their rifles and fired.

The rifles were hydraulic repeaters, and our friends were all good shots, so that none of them missed.

No reports came from the weapons, but the bullets exploded like bombs within the bodies of the seals, and aroused the rest.

They set up a terrific barking, and many of them began to drag themselves by their flippers toward the water.

"Look out, or the ones further out will escape us," warned Jack, bounding forward. "Dispatch them, and I'll go ahead."

He left his friend firing at the seals, and passing them, he went around a projection of the ice, disappeared from their sight, and observed several more.

They were making for the water as fast as they could drag their glistening, slippery bodies along, and Jack emptied his rifle, and then used it as a club.

He managed thus to secure four more seals.

The last one had gone into a sort of gully, and, unable to reach the water, had fled along the base of the berg.

Over a ridge it slipped, and then vanished.

Jack ran after it at full speed.

He dropped his rifle, and reaching the top of the ridge in haste, he stubbed his toe against the ice, and stumbled.

Down fell the young inventor with a thud.

He struck his shoulder and rolled over and over down into a deep hollow, into which the seal had gone.

By the time Jack reached the bottom he was fearfully shaken up, his clothing was torn by the jagged ice, and he received several ugly bruises.

Aching and confused, he was on the point of scrambling to his feet, when he was startled to hear a roar like muttering thunder close by, and a moment afterward he received a blow that knocked him over.

Something had hit him on the hip, grazed his skin, and caught fast in his clothes.

Jack had a bewildered idea that it was some enormous beast, and made a desperate effort to get away, but found that he couldn't.

He rallied his wits, and as soon as he was in full possession of all his faculties, he glanced around.

He saw an enormous walrus.

The beast lay roaring within a foot of him, and had plunged one of its enormous tusks through his clothes.

Jack was pinned to the ice, for the sharp end of the tusk had penetrated several inches in the berg, and was wedged there.

For a moment the boy did not know what to do.

The walrus was snarling and roaring with rage at finding its tusk caught, the long hairs on its muzzle were bristling, its round, fierce eyes blazed like live coals, and it began to tear and wrench it to free itself.

With every violent shake of its head, Jack was shaken like an aspen, and the ice began to fly in all directions, and grate furiously as it broke it.

Such force as was exerted soon liberated the tusk, but it still held in the boy's clothing.

As soon as the walrus was free, it arose upon its flippers, raised its head high in the air, and tossed it.

With a rip, the tusk tore through Jack's clothes.

He was tossed high in the air, uttering a cry for help.

Down fell his body like a shot, and landing squarely in front of the enraged beast, he struck upon his head and instantly lost his senses.

There lay the boy, pale and breathless, in front of the monster, and the beast drew nearer to him.

It glared at the boy for a moment, and then drew back its head to plunge its terrible tusks into his body, intent upon goring him to death.

CHAPTER X.

THE COLLISION.

"Cl'ar ther track, blast yer timbers, fer ther howlin' tor-nader o' ther Greenlan' seas, fer I'm b'arin' down on ye under tops'ls, an', shiver my timbers, ef I don't scuttle ye whar ye stan's hauled to!"

And ping! whistled a bullet from Tim's rifle.

He had just arrived on the scene.

Bang! went the bullet in the body of the walrus.

A mass of torn flesh was scattered in the air in fragments. Ping! went a second bullet.

This time it penetrated the beast's head.

A roar that arose to the lips of the walrus was literally cut in two and never finished, for when the bullet burst, the head of the beast was blown from the trunk.

The body made a convulsive leap, and came down quivering, not far from where Jack lay, whose senses were just returning.

Tim uttered a whoop of delight.

"Bull's-eye!" he chuckled, as he limped down in the hollow. "If I hadn't a-done it, keel haul me if ther blasted whale wouldn't a-sailed its bowsprit clear through ther lad's mid-

ship skylights. Heave away thar, my hearty. Veer off. Hoist away yer jibs, an' git under weigh—don't ye see as I've put a hole in that pirate's locker, an'—why—bless my game ole eyes—wot's ther matter—why don't he move?"

Tim reached Jack and bent over him.

He cast one glance of his solitary good eye upon the boy, and then recoiled, uttering a groan of distress.

"Dead as a flounder!" he gasped, turning pale.

Jack's appearance certainly warranted this conclusion, for the boy was a most distressed sight.

His clothing was torn, his body covered with blood, and he was bruised, pale and almost breathless.

Fortunately he recovered, and opened his eyes.

Soon he sat bolt upright.

Tim's courage revived at once, and he gave a yell.

"Horroar! I'm a liar!" he roared.

"What's—the—what's the matter?" gasped Jack, confusedly.

Then he saw the dead walrus, shuddered, and got up.

Tim grasped his arm and helped him.

"Bless my stars!" gladly cried the old sailor, "if I didn't reckon as ye wuz prepared fer a undertaker."

"Oh, I'm all right," said Jack pantingly, and feeling his head where he struck it, he continued: "But I gave my top-knot a terrible thump that laid me out."

"Ah! So that's ther way the wind blows, hey?"

"Did you kill that walrus, Tim?"

"I aimed ther gun as did it."

"Same thing. The brute nearly finished me."

"Aye, now, he wuz nearer than yer calkerlated, lad, an' as fer that big partner of hisn, an' ther rest o' ther herd——"

"What! Were there more than this one?"

"Lordy! Didn't yer see 'em?"

"No."

"Waal, yer must a-been blind."

"Did you drive them away?"

"Killed every one o' 'em!" assured Tim coolly.

"Where are the bodies?" queried Jack, peering around.

"Waal, yer see, when I got a bead on 'em I blazed away. Down they dropped one arter the other till thar wuz sixteen. Not one on 'em escaped. This un wuz ther smallest o' ther lot. I didn't want ther sight o' 'em ter scare ye, so whiles yer wuz senseless I grabs 'em wi' my tackles, an' heaves 'em down in ther sea one arter the other till ther hull twenty on 'em wuz throwed in."

"You said sixteen."

"Did I? Waal, I meant twenty, my hearty."

Jack saw right away that Tim was lying, and with a smile upon his face, he said:

"You're a regular Hercules to handle tons of dead weight so easily, Tim. Anyway, this fellow is done for, thanks to you. And as we have all the seals we need now, suppose we gather the skins and return to the Ocean Plunger?"

"That suits me," said Tim, taking a chew of navy plug.

They secured the pelts of the animals they had slain, and joining Fritz, who was busy getting the rest, they returned to the boat.

Just as they were about to embark, they heard a wild yell from Clark, and looking out over the water they saw the Ocean Plunger in a most perilous position.

The other icebergs had drifted down upon her, and she had been lying in a position midway between two of them, when a shift of the wind began to drive them together.

As the Plunger was then between them the wind did not strike her or move her, and she was then in danger of being crushed to pieces between the two icebergs.

Clark did not know how to manage her, and had to stand by and watch the bergs coming together upon him.

He uttered the cry of alarm they heard, and Jack yelled:

"Pull the lever No. 1."

The next instant the Plunger disappeared between the bergs, and the trio saw nothing more of her.

"Can't we reach her afore they comes together?" asked Tim, as he watched the bergs and grasped the oars.

"No," groaned Jack. "I'm afraid she's lost."

Fritz began to row with all his might.

"Donner und blitzen!" he cried frantically. "Don't stand here und do nodings. Maybe ve safe her. Coom on!"

They rowed hard, but only half the distance out to the berg was covered, when the great ice blocks came together.

There sounded an appalling crash, a grinding, splitting and rasping, and while one of the bergs split in two, the other was ground to powder on the side of contact.

Huge blocks of ice and enormous showers of smaller pieces, mingled with ice dust filled the air, and came down in showers all around, splashing up the brine, and thundering upon the bodies of the bergs.

A concerted cry of horror pealed from our friends.

The Ocean Plunger had not made its appearance, and it seemed improbable that there was any escape for her now.

"She is lost!" gasped Jack.

"Poor Clark, he must be crushed!" said Tim pityingly.

"Holy Moses, fellers, how ve got home now?" Fritz groaned.

Then a blank silence.

Every one was filled with dread.

The destruction of the bergs went on long after they had rebounded from one another, and Jack continued to strain his eyes in an effort to find some trace of the Plunger.

She did not appear, however.

"What shall we do?"

The boy's question started his two companions.

Adrift in the Greenland Sea without food or water, and nothing but a frail boat to depend upon, they were placed in a position of extreme peril now.

Tim looked up with a dazed expression.

"Blast my timber leg, if I knows wot ter say!" he exclaimed.

Fritz had an awfully troubled look on his face.

He felt like crying with despair.

"Let's got on vun ouf dem berg ices," said he, in the hope that it would offer them more security than the boat.

"That's no use," replied Jack.

"Wot kin we do, then?" queried Tim.

"Assure ourselves first that the boat was smashed."

"Donner und blitzen! Didn't ve see it?"

"No. We simply saw the bergs collide."

"Don't git up no false hopes, my lad."

"I haven't Tim, but I'm going to prove her, lads."

"How'll you do it?"

"By rowing around the two bergs, of course."

"Yah! Dere vos sure to been some signs left alretty."

Tim shook his head doubtingly.

He had no faith in the existence of the Ocean Plunger.

"'Tain't no use, but we'll do it if yer say so," said he.

"Then give way," said Jack. "I ain't going to give in to despair until I see with my own eyes that my boat is gone."

"If she afloat vas yet alretty, ve would a-seen her by dis time," commented Fritz. "But dot ve soon oud vill findt."

They rowed over to the nearest berg.

It was all broken to pieces on the side where it went in contact with the other berg, and what was left of it looked as if it would soon fall to pieces.

They rowed around its base, and all hands kept a sharp lookout for some signs of the missing boat.

But they saw nothing of her.

Neither was there any evidence of broken timbers or metal plates shown upon the berg.

"Nothing here," remarked Jack.

"Steer for ther other berg, then, Jack," said the old sailor. The boy did so, and they soon reached it, and found it in much better condition than the first one.

The boy steered his boat around the base of the berg.

CHAPTER XI.

THE ESQUIMAUX.

The rowboat soon reached the second berg, which was fully a mile in circumference around the base, and Tim and Fritz rowed hard, while the boy steered his boat and kept a lookout.

The ice had ceased falling, and the half-crushed berg was drifting apart from the other one, and going southward.

A very strong current had it in its grasp.

Deep silence ensued between the three castaways until the boat had made half the circuit, then Jack suddenly cried:

"There she is now!"

Fritz and Tim ceased rowing, and glanced around.

Ahead of them they saw the Ocean Plunger.

Her wheel was churning the water into foam astern, and her knighthead was jammed into a wide crevice in the berg.

The driving of her wheel seemed to be holding her there, while the drifting of the berg carried her along with it.

She was apparently uninjured, and Clark was on the deck.

It was very evident that he had followed Jack's order to pull Lever No. 1, and drove the boat at full speed between the bergs, coming out before they crashed together.

"Boat ahoy!" he yelled, upon catching sight of them.

"Ahoy!" replied Jack.

"Hurry up. She's stuck fast."

"Any damage done?"

"Not a bit."

"Thank heaven for that!"

"Hurroar!" bellowed Tim delightedly.

"Give way!" ordered the young inventor.

Down went the oars into the water, and away shot the boat as swift as an arrow toward the Ocean Plunger.

Upon reaching her Jack clambered aboard and ran into the pilot-house, leaving Tim and Fritz to get the boat out of the water.

The boy shut off power, the wheel stopped, and Clark entered.

"By Jove, I thought I was lost when those bergs collided!" he exclaimed. "But I followed your directions, and away I went. Not far, though, for before I could get hold of the wheel to steer her she ran in here and stuck fast. I didn't dare to touch the levers, for fear of making matters worse, and so I waited for you to appear and get her out of this. The intervening berg hid her from your sight, as she ran half-way around it ere touching here."

"How under the sun is it she escaped destruction?"

"The Lord only knows. Some of the falling ice hit her, and breaking to fragments, fell overboard; but her stout planks and tough metal easily resisted the battering."

Jack then told him what occurred to them.

He then reversed the lever, backed the Plunger out of her uncomfortable position, and left the berg astern.

The boy steered her away from the floating ice, and heading her for the northeast, they finally left the bergs hull down astern, where they vanished from sight.

Night fell upon the sea dark and dismal.

Fritz prepared a tasteful supper for them, and as they sat down to the table, snow began to fall in blinding clouds.

Jack remained at the wheel.

He started the searchlight, but, strong as its rays were,

they failed to penetrate the thick veil of falling flakes and the dull gloom of the stormy night.

Rain and hail beat down with the snow presently, and freezing all over the Ocean Plunger, it mantled her with a slippery, gleaming white coat.

Some frightened sea birds flew by.

Jack glanced at the thermometer.

It registered forty degrees below zero.

Inside of the boat the atmosphere was warm and cozy, though, for the boy had furnished her with electric heaters.

The sea was strewn with floating ice, but presently Jack observed that it came from the immense floes into which the boat was then rushing in the gloom.

There was danger of being nipped by this ice, and the boy called his friends from the cabin and explained it.

"There's a steel ram stowed away below," said he, "and I think we had better adjust it before we get in trouble."

"Don't it vas puddy coldt oudtsite?" queried Fritz.

"Bitter enough to freeze you. Not only put on your skin suits, but as much more of flannel clothing and your goggles to protect your eyes. If there were no wind, this coldness would not hurt you; as it is blowing now, you'd freeze in a twinkling."

They complied with what Jack said.

The ram was hauled up from below.

It was an immense arrangement, resembling the head of an axe, and was provided with bolts to fasten it to the bow.

Carrying it outside, they found the air filled with fine needles of ice that would have pierced to their very marrow had they not taken the precaution to guard themselves.

Even breathing was difficult.

Jack left the wheel in Clark's hands, and joining Tim and Fritz, he assisted them to adjust the ice-ram.

The metal became so intensely cold that they could scarcely handle it with thick gloves on, but they finally got it into position, just as the boat unexpectedly reached the floe.

A terrible crash followed the collision.

The sharp edge of the ram struck the floe, and ripped through, sending great blocks flying right and left.

It was fortunate that they secured the ram in time, for they now could cut their way through the cakes without injury to the boat, and kept steadily ahead.

Occasionally an open channel was met, and there detached pieces of ice were encountered, against which the ram ran, causing them to carrom from side to side while ever and anon a huge cake was caught fast and pushed ahead of the boat until it shot down at a slant.

Hour after hour thus passed by.

No one turned in, so great was the danger.

Along toward morning a cry was heard, coming from the gloom on the starboard quarter, and as there was a slight lull in the storm, the searchlight was turned in the direction from whence the sounds proceeded.

"They are human voices," said Jack, to his companions, "and judging by the tones, the one who shouted seemed to be in trouble."

"Aye, but it wuzn't no English wot wuz spoke," said Tim.

"Sounded more as Sherman," said Fritz thoughtfully.

"Look there!" interposed Clark, pointing out the window.

In the glare of the searchlight there suddenly loomed up a large floating cake of ice, upon which stood several Esquimaux and their igloos, or snow-houses.

They had a number of sledge-dogs with them.

Driven along by the tempest, the ice floe was rapidly being carried off in the gloom, bearing its human freight to their destruction, when Jack steered the boat after it.

Gaining upon the drifting ice, they finally overtook it, and Jack ran out on deck, and flung a grapnel over, the hooks of which caught fast in the ice.

In a moment more the boat had come to a pause beside the floe, and the boy was assisting the fur-clad, short, fat, copper-colored Esquimaux upon the deck with their dogs and weapons.

There were five men, two boys and three females.

Grateful to Jack for saving them from destruction, they began to bestow the most profuse blandishments upon him; each one insisted upon rubbing noses with the boy, after the manner of their friendliest custom.

Jack could not understand a word they said, and a short trial showed that they could not speak English.

The boy beckoned to them to enter the pilot-house, where, to every one's surprise, Clark addressed the natives in the language commonly used in Greenland.

Instantly the natives replied.

"Whence came you?" was the reporter's query.

"We built our huts on the Greenland shore near to Holsteinborg," one of the natives replied quickly, "when this storm arose, broke up the ice, and cast us adrift."

"Is that how you happened to be on the ice cake?"

"Yes. And we are grateful for our lives being saved."

"Say no more about it, and we will set you ashore."

The natives were all delighted at this offer.

Clark then translated to the rest what was said, and added:

"You seem surprised that I can speak the language of these fellows, but you need not be, for I once spent a year with a surveying party among them at Nunarsoit Island, where I learned a smattering of their lingo."

Just then the voice of Fritz interrupted them.

"Hard alee! Holy Moses! Shack, breakers aheth!"

Startled, every one glanced out, and hearing the sullen roar of the surf, they soon saw it running in high upon a bleak, rocky shore athwart their course.

The Ocean Plunger was running aground!

Around spun the wheel in the young inventor's hands just as a grating noise under the keel betrayed the fact that they were then on a shoal.

CHAPTER XII.

SKATING AFTER GAME.

Jack grasped the reverse lever and pulled it, spun the wheel around, and the Ocean Plunger began to back away.

It was well he acted so promptly, for the searchlight showed them a small island, which lay several leagues from the main, down upon which the snow was falling.

The roaring surf was piling up great jagged hills of broken ice in confused masses along the shore, lending the place a wild, picturesque look.

Nothing but ice, snow and surf, running mountain high, were to be seen upon this isolated island, which was possibly nothing more than a sand bar.

Back from the shoals glided the Ocean Plunger, grating at every yard, until deep water was gained.

She had a difficult task, too, as she was forced to contend against the furious wind, the undertow, and scarcely enough water to float in.

Nothing but Jack's skillful management saved her from running aground.

"Let the wind blow and the surf roar!" he muttered grimly, as he looked back. "They can do us no harm now."

"If we'd a-gone ashore in them 'ere breakers, my lad," remarked Tim, "thar wouldn't be no salvage ever claimed on this craft. Stiddy her now due north'ard."

"Fritz!"

"Yah!"

"Fire up the engine."

"Yah!"

"Connect the dynamo with the batteries."

"Yah!"

"Our power is weakening."

The Dutch boy waddled away to execute the order.

"I wish we were well out of this storm," muttered Clark.

"Ah! Get out, you big fool!"

"What did you say?" growled Clark, turning upon Tim angrily.

"Didn't open my jawin'-tackle," assured Tim solemnly.

"You lie!"

"Hey!" roared Tim fiercely, as he swung around and glared at Clark.

"What?" innocently questioned the reporter.

"Who yer callin' names?"

"I didn't say anything to you."

"Aye, but yer called me a——"

"Fool! Fool! Fool! Ha, ha, ha!"

It was Bismarck who spoke.

He had been grumbling to himself as he stood on one leg upon the rung of a chair and interposed the words which they supposed had been uttered by each other.

As soon as Tim and Clark saw who spoke, they both looked very foolish at being so easily gulled by the bird.

"Lord, what a fake!" laughed Clark.

"Funny how easy ther lubber fooled us both."

"It was because we didn't expect to hear him."

"Aye, now, that's it," laughed Tim, giving a hitch to his pants and nodding. "It reminds me o' a leetle thing wot happened ter me when I wuz in ther navy. Ther ole frigate Wabash wuz sailin' along ther coast o' Cuby one day when we heered ther commodore roar out 'Port yer helm!' Now, if I'd a-done that we'd a-gone plumb ashore, yet he repeated 'Port yer helm!'"

"That was a queer order!" remarked Clark.

"Aye, it wuz. 'We'll run ashore, sir,' ses I, lookin' aroun', but blast me if I seen any sign o' him. A few minutes afterwards I heerd him again. 'Port yer helm, yer lubber!' yelled he, 'or I'll break yer head!' Bein' as I didn't want my figger-head stove in, I obeyed, an' we run aground."

"The deuce!" said Clark, in surprise.

"Waal, sir," continued Tim, "no sooner wuz we aground when out rushed ther commodore from his cabin, an' he rails at me like fury fer portin' ther helm, when I ups an' says, 'You told me ter do it, sir,' an' he answers werry savage-like, 'I didn't, neither.' Then all ther watch on deck told him they heerd ther order, an' ther commodore then ses, 'I've been asleep fer ther past hour in my cabin.' We didn't know wot ter make o' that, fer a sleepin' officer don't ginerally give no orders, an' I'd a-got rats if ther cabin boy hadn't j'ined us just then, an' said he wuz in ther cabin when ther commodore was a-sleepin' an' heerd him cry out in his sleep, 'Port yer helm.' Then the capten he remembered as he wuz a-dreamin' as we wuz tackin', an' in his dream had given jist sich a order."

"How strange."

"Aye, now, so it wuz. We drifted afloat at high tide," said Tim, taking a chew of navy plug; "so we got off all right."

Just then Fritz called up the tube for Tim to come down and help him, and the old sailor stumped away, leaving Clark pondering over the strange story, and wondering whether it really happened, or if it was one of Tim's yarns.

Of course it was not true, but it had such a plausible ring to it that Tim astonished himself, and stumped away thinking:

"I reckon I ketched him wi' that 'ere whopper."

Black clouds of smoke poured up from the stack, and the batteries were refilled.

By daytime the Ocean Plunger was close to the shore, and the storm had passed away.

Jack headed his boat for Holsteinborg, and arriving there the Esquimaux were set ashore, and the boy went with them to question the governor of the little settlement about the lost crew of the Ice King.

Unfortunately he could not gain any information, and finally returned to his boat with the ill tidings.

The Ocean Plunger passed out of the sheltered bay early the following morning, the sky and water clear, and although the weather was bitterly cold, it was not as bad as the snap they encountered during the storm.

Clark was an excellent tailor.

He took the sealskins, which Tim had rudely tanned, and with them he made each of them a fine warm suit.

The boat was now headed for Disco Island, but as they proceeded northward they were forced to keep far from the mainland, as the shore ice extended far out.

On the afternoon when they reached Egedesminde Bay Jack went up on the hurricane deck with a glass, and scanning the high rocky cliffs lining the shore, he cried:

"By Jove! there's a swarm of eider ducks for you on those rocks. There's millions of them—millions!"

"Dot some goot preakfasts for us would make if we a few ouf dem couldt shootet alretty!" eagerly suggested Fritz, who was anxious for a change in the bill of fare.

"How can we reach them from here?" queried Clark.

"Why, that's very easy," replied Jack. "I have a mind to go. It's a week since we've had a chance to stretch our legs on shore. Get your weapons ready."

"All right. But how about crossing the ice?"

"I've got a dozen pairs of skates in the storeroom."

They all knew how to use these articles, and rapid preparations were made for a few hours' sport.

Considering it dangerous to leave the boat in the incompetent care of Clark again, Jack asked Tim to remain on board, and running the boat over to the shore, he brought her to a pause.

The three then made a landing upon the ice, which was very thick and solid, and examining their weapons, they adjusted their skates and started off.

A thin crust of brittle, frozen snow covered the top of the ice for some distance, through which their glistening runners crackled and crunched; but nearer inshore they came to a clear, smooth place which had been swept by the wind, and then the enjoyment began.

They were all good skaters, and presently reached the base of the cliffs that were black with eider ducks.

Shot after shot was then fired in among the flock, and scores of the birds came raining down upon the ice all around them.

Terrified by the explosive bullets, the ducks arose with a deafening whirring of wings in such numbers that the sky overhead was fairly darkened for a while.

Enough of the birds were brought down to last a month, and the three adventurers began to secure their game, when down through a rocky defile came an enormous female polar bear, accompanied by two of her cubs.

They paused, glanced at the three men, and snuffing the air, they came toward Jack's party at a lumbering trot.

"Skedaddle!" exclaimed Clark, recoiling. "They're after us!"

"No, they ain't. They scent the birds we killed," said Jack.

"Don't led 'em got dem!" gasped Fritz, rapidly picking up the ducks from the ice. "Shiminey Christmas, vellers, ve vant 'em!"

The bears had reached some of the game by this time, and proved Jack's conclusion to be true by ravenously devouring them as fast as they could pick them up.

"This won't do!" exclaimed Jack, with a frown. "We won't have a duck left if we let those brutes eat them. I think we had better put a ball in the beasts."

CHAPTER XIII.

ENTOMBED IN A DEN.

The bears had not offered to molest any one, their chief object seeming to be to devour as much of the game as they could in the shortest possible space of time.

Our friends, however, did not purpose to allow this to continue, and scattering they each discharged one round.

One of the cubs fell dead from Fritz's shot.

Clark was less successful, as he merely wounded the other.

The ball from Jack's rifle glanced along the big one's body, inflicting a painful gash, and the bear uttered a roar.

She glared at the boy for a moment, licked the wound, and then, observing that one of her cubs lay prostrate, she rushed over to it, and began snuffing around the carcass.

Failing to arouse it this way, she kept shoving it over with her nose until she finally discovered the wound by which it perished, and then licked it off.

Meantime she kept up a low, whining growl.

Jack aimed at her, and fired again.

This time the ball lodged in her side, and took a large piece of flesh out when it exploded.

The beast uttered a frightful cry, bounded back from her cub, and seeming to realize that the boy was the cause of her misery, she plunged straight toward him.

Clark recoiled, somewhat frightened by the fierce demeanor of the brute, and the other cub trotted away with Fritz in pursuit of it.

"Look out, Wright!" shouted the flying reporter.

"I've got another charge left," calmly replied Jack.

"Run for your life."

"Not till I fire this ball."

"Then fire it."

"Wait till the brute gets nearer."

On came the bear, and Jack stood directly in its path, with his rifle aimed straight at its head, never flinching an inch.

He waited until the beast was within ten feet of him, to make sure of hitting it, and then pulled the trigger.

Unfortunately, no more bullets were left in the weapon.

Jack had miscalculated the number of shots he had fired.

With a violent roar the bear reached him, and before the boy could get out of its way, up it rose on its haunches, and out shot its long paws.

It did not attempt to hug the boy.

But it dealt him a terrible blow on the chest.

Jack was knocked sprawling.

His rifle fell from his hands.

Over and over he rolled upon the ice, never pausing until he was a dozen yards away from the bear.

Stunned by his fall, the boy lay as still as death for a moment, and the savage beast reached his side.

With a snap of its gleaming white teeth it caught the young inventor by the jacket, and the next moment it went racing away, dragging him with it toward the rocky defile from whence it had come with its cubs.

Clark went skating after it, and yelled:

"Hey, Fritz! Hey, Fritz!"

"Hullo!" responded the fat boy, pausing.

"Help me here, for heaven's sake!"

Fritz knocked the cub over that he was pursuing, and came gliding rapidly after Clark.

They dared not fire at the bear that had hold of Jack, for

fear of hitting the boy, but being able to travel very swiftly on their skates, they rapidly overtook the brute and awaited their opportunity.

Reaching the defile, the bear rushed in, and before Fritz or his companion could do anything it plunged into a small round opening in the face of the cliff.

Through a tunnel it dragged Jack into a large cave in which it dwelt, the floor of which was strewn with the bones of various birds and beasts which it had devoured.

By this time Jack recovered.

The bear's mate was in the cave.

It was a much bigger creature than the female, and greeted the arrival of its consort with a deep growl.

In the roof of the cave there was a small opening which admitted the dim light of the declining day, a dull twilight diffusing itself through the cavern that lent objects a shadowy, uncertain appearance.

Jack now began to realize what was transpiring, and a cold chill passed over him when he found what danger he was placed in.

"I've got a knife and pistol left," he muttered, "but they are wretched weapons with which to fight these brutes."

Dragged into the middle of the den, the helpless boy was dropped upon the ground by the bear, which thereupon planted one of its shaggy paws on his bosom, and lifting its salivating mouth it vented a terrible growl.

Its mate stood across the den watching it.

Now it began to amble nearer.

Jack's hand rested upon the hilt of his knife.

He drew the blade out and suddenly plunged it up to the hilt in the neck of his captor.

It must have affected the beast like an electric shock, for it sprang back snarling with pain and surprise, and the boy hastily arose.

He yet had on the skates, and found it difficult to stand, as he had no time to take them off.

When the bear recoiled, it tore the handle of the knife from Jack's hand, and carried the weapon away buried in the wound.

But Jack yet retained possession of his revolver.

He pulled it out, and taking deliberate aim, he fired at the male beast, which had come lumbering toward him.

Struck in the right foreleg, that member was blown off, and a volley of growls, snarls and roars emanated from the brute's lips that filled the cavern with a deafening noise.

Jack retreated toward the exit.

"I'll get out of these close quarters if I can!" he muttered.

Before he could accomplish this purpose, though, the female flew between him and the exit, and he shot at her.

Hit in the chest, her lungs were penetrated, and she fell snarling to the floor, when he fired another shot at her.

This time she was killed.

Polar bears are tenacious of life, the boy found out, and he had cause to congratulate himself for killing the brute.

Unluckily, though, the enormous carcass of the dead bear fell over the opening by which Jack calculated to escape.

Blocking up the passage, he was thus confined in the cave with the largest beast, with no chance to get away till he killed it, and no opportunity for his friends to come in to his aid.

The boy faced the other brute.

Its gaping mouth gleamed with sharp teeth, his eyes sparkled with rage, and it seemed to be anxious to get at the boy to avenge the injury he did it.

The monster was loping toward him lamely.

He aimed his pistol and fired a second shot at it, but the beast managed to get out of the bullet's way in time, and thus escaped injury.

But one more shot remained in the pistol, and the boy did not have another bullet with him.

His chief anxiety now was to get hold of his knife, and he rushed over toward the defunct bear to seize and pull it out of the wound, when the big beast anticipated him, and drove him back.

It now swiftly pursued Jack, in spite of its wounded leg, and Jack was driven back into a corner.

Desperate over his situation, the boy fired his last shot, struck the brute on the head, knocked it down with an ugly wound, and sprang over its body.

He now had no trouble in securing the knife, but no sooner had it in his hand when the bear arose.

Jack was then in such an angry frame of mind that he became reckless, and instead of making any effort to get away from his foe, he charged on it.

The bear was coming toward him at the same juncture, and they met in the middle of the cavern.

Up went Jack's hand, as the brute arose on its haunches, and he grasped it by the white, hairy throat.

Drawing back his blade, he stabbed the bear again and again, each wound causing it to growl.

A terrible struggle ensued between the boy and the beast, and it is doubtful if Jack would have survived the fight had his antagonist not been disabled.

The coolness and courage displayed by Jack were marvelous in the extreme.

He was utterly devoid of fear.

He faced the beast, and clung to it; he fought it, and took his own share of punishment, and he finally fell to the floor with it, struggling furiously to plant his knife in its heart.

CHAPTER XIV.

LURED INTO A TRAP.

"Hey, Jack! Where are you?"

"In the cave."

"And the bears?"

"Both dead, Clark."

"What's this over the entrance?"

"The carcass of the female. Wait; I'll move it!"

Alone in the bears' den stood Jack, triumphantly eyeing his two slain foes, and Clark in the passage with Fritz trying to get in to help him. But he needed no assistance now.

The boy was strong, but it was as much as he could do to move aside the heavy body of the bear so that his two friends could get into the cavern and see what he had done.

"Jerusalem der goltel!" gasped Fritz, glancing around.

"Both det!"

"I played a lone hand in this game," laughed Jack.

"And you ain't hurt?" queried Clark in amazement.

"Scratched a little. I cheated them out of a meal, though."

"By Jove, this was a desperate struggle, Wright."

"Well, I've provided fresh meat for our larder, and some very excellent skins for our comfort by this job."

"Four pears! Vell, dot peats der Dutch!" commented Fritz.

"Set to upon them while I regain my breath, boys," said Jack, "and we'll remove them to the boat."

The others assented.

Quartering their bodies when they were skinned, they dragged the meat out upon the ice, and thence to the boat.

When all the bear meat and ducks were stowed away, our friends embarked and the boat started.

Tim was put into possession of the facts.

"Jack 'd a-killed 'em if he'd a-been locked up wi' fifty

b'ars, ten catamounts, an' forty rattlesnakes," the old fellow proudly commented, for he had a very high opinion of the young inventor's ability.

"Oh, come, Tim, draw it mild," remonstrated Jack, smilingly.

"I had quite an adventure myself while yers wuz gone."

"What happened, Tim?" asked the reporter.

"D'yer see Whiskers, thar?" queried Tim, pointing at the monkey, which stood soaking wet under a table.

"Been giving him a bath?" laughed Clark.

"No. Ther lubber got a-fightin' Bismarck. I ain't a-say-in' as I sicked him at ther blasted parrot, but yer kin jedge fer yerself who got ther wust o' ther scrimmage when yer notices as one o' ther bird's legs is all chawed up, an' the feathers is all gone from his neck."

"Dot vos schmart ouf you!" growled Fritz.

"How did the monkey get drenched?" asked Clark curiously.

"Waal," drawled Tim reflectively, "it happened this way."

Fritz drew his old accordeon from a locker at this point, and sitting down upon an empty box he began to play a tune.

"Yer see," began Tim, scowling at the Dutch boy, "ther fight took place out on deck, an' afore I knowed it Bismarck chawed off ther end o' ther monkey's tail——"

"Horroar fer Shermamy!" yelled Fritz.

"Avast, thar!" growled Tim. "Waal, ther monkey flew up in the air, an' landed in ther sea kerplunk."

"Hurroar fer Shermamy!" howled Fritz again.

"I didn't want ther lubber ter git drowned," said Tim, "so wot should I do but dive in arter him. Down I went, an' grabbed Whiskers jist as a shark made a dart for him. Away I swum, wi' ther shark arter me, but it overhauled me arter we'd swum a mile an' a quarter, an'——"

"Matter ouf Moses, vot a lie!" sang out Fritz.

"Belay, yer lubber. I ain't talkin' ter you!" growled Tim.

Fritz nodded, grinned, and worked off several doleful tunes on his old music box, much to Tim's exasperation.

"I had a dynamite bomb in my starboard pocket," said the old sailor, continuing his narrative, "an' jist as the shark wuz a-goin' ter gobble me up, I dropped ther bomb into its open mouth. It busted——"

"Vot—der mouth?" queried Fritz.

"Ther bomb, yer fool," snorted Tim, "an' it blowed ther whole figgerhead off ther lubber. That's how I got back alive."

"Can you tell me how it is that you didn't get your clothes wet, if you was in the water going through such a terrible encounter?" asked Clark. "The suit you've got on is the same one you wore when we left you, and it's perfectly dry."

Tim looked startled.

He did not know what to say.

That he was caught in an awful lie he knew very well.

Loud and fierce played the old accordeon, and Tim suddenly realized that it gave him a chance to get out of his scrape.

He turned upon Fritz with a savage look, and yelled:

"Stop that infernal music, yer lubber, or I'll murder it."

"Bull up yer west; you vos gittin' too stale," advised Fritz.

"Gosh blame yer, I'll teach yer ter insult a feller citizen," bellowed Tim, and he hauled off his wooden peg and kicked the accordeon up to the ceiling.

"Donner und blitzen! It's pusted!" yelled Fritz.

Instantly the irascible Dutch boy was aroused to a high pitch of rage, and with his yellow hair fairly bristling, and his watery blue eyes bulging out with anger, he sprang to his feet and plunged at Tim, butting the old fellow in the stomach and knocking him off his pins!"

"Lord! I'm scuttled!" groaned the ancient mariner.

"Got out ouf der vay, der virrvind from der Faderland vas comin'!" bellowed Fritz, and he made a flying leap and landed on top of the old sailor. "Pust me mine moosic pox, vill yer? By shiminetty, I proke me efery pone by your pody. Voop! Here goes his face to smash!"

He pounded Tim's head on the floor.

Over rolled the sailor, and catching Fritz on the jaw with his wooden leg he knocked it out of joint.

Then they grabbed each other by the hair and struggled.

Had Jack and Clark not interfered just then there would have been a riot on board the Ocean Plunger.

They dragged Tim downstairs and locked Fritz in a closet. Peace was then restored.

The watch was then divided, and supper partaken of, after which they took turns at turning in.

Late on the following day they sighted Disco Island, and ran into the harbor, encountering a strong fishy odor.

It came from the putrefying fish lining the shores.

The anchor was hove, and all hands went ashore.

The English-speaking governor of the place met them, but had received no tidings from the lost crew of the Ice King, which had gone north to prove the existence of an open polar sea, alleged to have been discovered by Dr. Hayes.

A few days were spent at Disco.

Then our friends bade farewell to the hardy inhabitants, embarked on the boat, and left the place.

A run of two days along the ice-bound coast followed, and on the morning of the third day Clark came in from the hurricane deck, where he had been posted on lookout, and reported having seen a native kyack with a single Esquimau in it, dead ahead.

Jack was in the cabin talking to Fritz about the machinery, while the fat boy was mending his accordeon, and Tim was up forward in the pilot-house steering.

The sea was full of floating ice.

"A native in a kyack?" queried Jack. "Well, there must be plenty of those fellows along this coast. They are cunning rascals, and great thieves, too, I've been told."

He passed out on deck, and when the Plunger reached the skin-covered canoe, the dusky fellow hailed them.

He spoke in broken English quite well.

"Stoppee boat!" he cried. "Me want yo'."

"Anything the matter?" shouted Jack.

"Whalee ship, him caught ober dere," replied the Esquimau, pointing inland among some channels that ran through a mass of hummocky ice. "You helpee dem, sah?"

"A whaler nipped by the ice, eh? Why, yes—come aboard."

"No. Me show where yo' go. Come on."

He paddled into the widest channel through the ice, and Jack told Tim to follow him, as they might be able to help the imperiled people of whom the Esquimau had spoken.

The native managed his canoe skillfully, and piloted them by all the curves and windings of the channels into a small lagoon not far from the shore, surrounded by high icy hills.

Scarcely, however, had they turned the last bend in the stream, when a shout went up from Jack.

"Treachery! Look out, boys!"

His warning came none too soon.

They sprang to the doors and fastened them, and closed the shutters over the windows, for the treacherous Esquimau had lured them into an ambushade.

A volley of arrows shot toward the boat, and a swarm of natives numbering several hundred came from their places of concealment behind the ice hills.

Those that were nearest managed to clamber on board the boat as she grazed the shore.

CHAPTER XV.

A BATTLE WITH GUNS.

It was very evident to Jack that the native in the kyack had lied to them—that there was no whaler nipped by the ice in the lagoon, and that the Esquimaux had sighted his boat, and dispatched the kyack paddler to lure them into the lagoon so they could fall upon the boat and rob it.

These highwaymen of the coast were shrewd schemers, and had amassed a number sufficient to overcome any ordinary ship's crew in such an attack.

"Dey vhas fooled mit us!" gasped Fritz.

"Is everything secure against invasion?" asked Jack.

"Fer sure."

"Then bring up our weapons."

"Do they intend to rob us?" queried Clark.

"I firmly believe they expected to."

"Thar ain't no other reason fer this," commented Tim.

"Not since Red Eric of centuries ago first attacked them," replied the boy. "These fellows are merely wanton thieves, and they can't get into the boat, nor can their primitive weapons penetrate our stout metal plates."

Fritz came up just then with some small arms, and Tim stopped the machinery of the Plunger.

She drifted into the lagoon.

The natives on the ice were yelling and rushing to and fro like madmen, showering volley after volley of spears and arrows at the boat, while the fellows who had gained a footing upon the deck, pounded the deck houses with their clubs and stone axes in a vain effort to burst through and reach the inmates.

For several minutes a regular pandemonium ensued, as the Esquimaux were chagrined at being unable to reach their intended victims.

Jack divided the arms among his party.

"Man the loopholes!" he exclaimed, "and drive those beggars from the decks. When we get rid of them we can repel the rest easily, and work our way back to the sea."

A few moments afterwards they opened fire on the natives, and a babel of harsh, guttural cries arose among them.

Several of the fat, greasy, flat-nosed fellows dropped to the deck, and the rest took fright and retreated sternward.

Our friends ran into the rear compartments.

From the loopholes there they continued to pour out a disastrous fire, and upon finding that their men were rapidly falling, the rest sprang overboard.

This was just what Jack wanted.

"Vot now?" queried Fritz, when the deck was cleared.

"Come down in the storeroom with me, Tim."

"Aye, aye, lad! What's ter be did?"

"Get out your armor, and go out to the turret to the guns."

"I'm wi' yer."

"Fritz, take the wheel, and steer her out to sea again."

"Go aheth! I vhas retty."

"You, Clark, fire on the first one who boards us."

"I don't believe they'll venture to risk it, but I'll obey," said the reporter, as he reloaded his weapons.

Jack and the old sailor thereupon went down to the storeroom, and each put on a suit of aluminum scales that were tested to be bullet proof.

They were invented by Jack.

Having secured some ammunition for the guns, they left the shelter of the pilot-house and boldly passed out on deck, their appearance being greeted by a furious yell from the natives on the ice.

In back of the turret there was a flight of stairs leading up to the turret top and hurricane deck, and they ascended.

A shower of missiles were shot at them the moment they reached the top, and they were struck in various places; but the arrows and spears snapped harmlessly in two against their metal armor, and fell to the deck.

Jack manned one of the big guns, and Tim the other.

As soon as they were loaded, they trained them to bear upon the Esquimaux on the ice, and fired.

Two thunderous reports pealed out.

With demoniacal howls the shots sped away, and while Jack's struck in the midst of a large party of their enemies, the one Tim fired burst on the ice.

A fearful scene followed.

Many of the rascals were blown to atoms, and the ice was ripped up and blown high in the air.

There arose a chorus of wild cries from the natives, and those who were left fled for their lives in all directions, completely demoralized.

"Victory at one shot!" cried Jack.

"Will we give ther lubbers another?" anxiously asked Tim.

"No, not unless they attempt to molest us again."

"I'll load up ter git ready, anyway."

"Fritz, turn the Plunger, and run down the channel again."

"Yah!" came the Dutch boy's reply.

Around went the circular boat, and the fat boy headed her for the channel, into which she ran.

Fritz put on a heavy voltage, too.

While this was being done, Jack and his companions swung the guns around to bear back sternward, in order to cover their retreat.

The natives saw them running away, and imagining that they were frightened, rallied their forces, and with fierce cries they came running after the Plunger.

They began to fire their weapons again, and the barbed shafts rattled and clicked spitefully all over the boat.

Jack watched them carefully for a while, and seeing that they were becoming emboldened by receiving no return fire, he turned to Tim, and said quietly:

"Give them another shot, old man. They are getting reckless. We must bring them up with a short turn to teach them the danger of trifling with us."

"Heave away, my hearty! I'm ready for 'em!" cheerily answered Tim, as he squinted along the barrel of the gun.

They each secured a good target this time.

Boom! Boom! roared the ordnance.

The destruction created this time was far worse than the preceding shots effected, and away ran the natives helter skelter, until they had screened themselves behind the ice hills again, where they disappeared out of sight.

"The fight is ours," said Jack. "That settles it!"

"Bless me, thar ain't enough o' ther lubbers lef' ter poperlate a hamlet!" chuckled Tim.

They descended to the deck.

Not one of the natives was to be seen now, save those who were killed and wounded, and a few in kyacks, who were rapidly paddling away.

It was an easily won victory, because our friends had every advantage of attack and defense on their side, yet they might have got themselves into trouble.

The boat opened up the headland presently, and turned up the coast, while Jack and Tim went inside and took off their suits of armor.

The day passed, and night fell early in that region, the boat plowing its way through a field of broken ice drifting southward.

As the mantle of night fell upon the sea, Jack discerned two tiny gleaming lights far ahead, which he made out to be ship's lanterns, and communicated the fact to his companions.

"Must be whalers," suggested Tim.

"No doubt," the boy replied. "We'll run up to them."

The old sailor was managing the wheel, and Jack went out on deck, when a feeble cry for help reached his ears.

It came from down in the water, and the boy hastened to the railing, and saw a man in the sea clinging to a piece of ice.

He was a sailor, and was in arm's reach of the boat, but evidently had something the matter with him, as he could not move.

The Plunger was stopped, and they picked the man up and found that he was badly wounded.

"In heaven's name," said Jack, "how did you get hurt so, and how came you to be adrift on that cake of ice?"

"I'm afraid I'm done for," gasped the poor fellow feebly. "I'm one of the crew of the whaler Happy Hattie. We gathered a big cargo of oil, and were homeward bound, when we fell in with a whaler named the Phantom——"

"Ha! Philip Bangs' craft."

"You know him, then? Well, he was a bad man with his crew of ruffians. Too lazy to gather a cargo, he has abandoned work and taken to piracy."

"Piracy?"

"Aye! To-night he attacked our ship, and those of the crew who escaped death were put ashore; he seized our cargo of oil, scuttled the ship, and made off a while ago. I was on her, and only escaped drowning by clinging to the ice."

"Then the ship whose lights I see ahead must be Philip Bangs' craft?" excitedly said Jack.

"It is," replied the sailor.

"I'll pursue the villain and seek retribution."

CHAPTER XVI.

A SUBMARINE EXPLOSION.

The sailor's story about Philip Bangs' attack on the Happy Hattie filled Jack and his friends with horror.

They knew from past experience with the captain and crew of the Phantom what ruffians they were.

Now they had placed themselves in the position of pirates by attacking the whaler's crew, stealing her cargo, and scuttling the ship, and Jack resolved to seek retribution.

They were then two days north of Disco Island, and in the gloom he saw the lights of the Phantom ahead.

The boy had the wounded sailor carried inside and cared for. Then all the lights of the Ocean Plunger were put out.

After their fight with the treacherous Esquimaux, they all were satisfied for that day, but it seemed as if they were to get more of it now.

"If we meet these obstacles much more," the boy thought, "we may never find the lost crew of the Ice King. What did the newspaper want to send that craft to verify Dr. Hayes' report for, of having found an open polar sea?"

"Wright, there's going to be war when we meet the crew of the Phantom!" exclaimed Clark, as he joined the boy on deck. "Don't you remember when you shot Philip Bangs in the arm on board of his ship, how he swore vengeance against you?"

"The time we recovered the valuables which he stole from you in my house?" queried Jack. "Oh, well, I ain't much afraid of the rascal on that score. He is a coward at heart—you saw the evidence of it when we forced him to disgorge, and such people don't count for much as enemies."

"How'll we head her, Jack?" came Tim's query from the pilot-house just then, interrupting them.

"Can you make out her port lights?"

"No; they've gone out, my hearty."

"That's bad. Keep on as you are going."

The Ocean Plunger kept her course, and presently they heard the wash of the waves against the hull of a ship, and the creaking of her spars and rigging.

It was evident that they were now close to the craft they sought, and Jack went in, and assuming command of the wheel, he told Tim and Fritz to get upon the turret with some ammunition and man the guns.

They did so.

Clark remained on deck.

The pilot-house windows stood open.

Listening intently, Jack located the ship.

Then he reached over, pulled a lever, and started the search-light.

Its blinding rays gushed out upon the heaving sea with startling effect, and fell upon a large, majestic ship under full sail, bearing away to the westward.

She was the Phantom.

All her crew were on deck.

They uttered a chorus of cries when the light flashed out.

"Now for it!" muttered Jack breathlessly. "Ship ahoy!"

"Ahoy, there!" came the gruff reply in Bangs' voice.

"Heave to!" came Jack's order.

"What for?"

"I wish to board you."

"Who are you, anyway?"

"Jack Wright!"

A murmur of voices went up from the Phantom's crew, for they now realized that it was the Ocean Plunger behind them.

After a pause Bangs suddenly yelled:

"We don't want yer, nor none o' yer blasted crew aboard o' this craft, so ye'd better veer off, if yer knows when ye're well off."

"You must obey, you pirate!" shouted the boy. "You have got to pay for your attack on the Happy Hattie, if I have to compel you to do so by force of arms."

"Ho, ho! So that's your game, is it?"

"Will you obey me or not?"

"No, blast yer, no!"

This defiance was followed by a hoarse order to the crew of the Phantom to clear the deck for action, and a command to the crew to beat to quarters and arm themselves.

Jack called Clark inside and shut off the searchlight, enshrouding the sea in dense gloom again, when Tim and Fritz were called down and the doors and windows closed.

The boy then sank his boat.

The ventilators were closed automatically, and the boat buried itself until only a yard of the smokestacks were above water.

None too soon was this done.

The Phantom was provided with guns, and a few moments after the Ocean Plunger disappeared, several thunderous shots were fired at the place where she had been.

Passing harmlessly over the buried boat, the shots were wasted, and the submarine boat plunged ahead close to the stern of the whaling vessel.

The crew of the Phantom fired several rounds of cartridges back with like result, and as the Ocean Plunger continued unhurt, she rapidly gained on the whaler.

The young inventor and his friends were in a strange situation plunging along under the sea.

An automatic air-injector had been started that supplied the living rooms with a supply of atmosphere from the reservoir, and as fast as the breath of our friends vitiated it, valves in the roof carried off the used-up air in bubbles in the sea.

The boat worked as well under water as on the surface.

The gloom was dissipated in the pilot-house by an electric light Jack started, and they easily discerned the submerged

part of the Phantom's hull ahead of them by peering through the loopholes in the windows.

Within a short time the Plunger forged up to the fugitive ship, and resigning the wheel to Tim, Jack went into the storeroom and put on a diving suit.

He also armed himself with a bomb and a copper wire.

His friends had their instructions, and he entered a large closet-like compartment and closed the water-tight door.

He then fastened his visor, and starting the air from the knapsack to the helmet, he opened a door leading on deck.

In gushed the sea, filling the apartment, and the boy passed out on deck and started his helmet lamp.

Tim saw him from the pilot-house.

Jack made his way up forward, and pausing at the knight-head, moved his light in a signal to the old sailor to go ahead according to his instructions.

The boy examined the bomb.

It was a brass cylinder, with a spike in one end and a binding post in the other to hold the wire.

The old sailor managed the boat so that she arose up under the stern of the Phantom, and brought her to a pause when the keel of the after part was within Jack's reach.

Then Jack fastened the bomb to the Phantom's rudder-post by sticking the spike in the wood, after which he secured the wire to the binding post.

He then signaled to Tim, and payed out the wire.

The old sailor backed the boat away, and when she was at a safe distance, Jack fastened the end of the wire which he held to the battery on his knapsack.

He then started a current through the wire.

There sounded a smothered report as the bomb exploded, and the rudder was blown off the Phantom, causing her stern to go up and her bow to go down.

She instantly swung up into the wind.

Jack coiled up the wire and returned to the closet.

Shutting the door, he pressed an electric button on the wall, when the pump started working, and emptied the water from the room by drawing it off through the exhaust pipe.

As soon as the water was all out, Jack opened the door that led into the interior, and passed inside.

Meantime, Tim had brought the Plunger to the surface, and starting the searchlight, opened the window shutters.

They lay alongside of the crippled Phantom.

Having divested himself of his diving suit, Jack entered the pilot-house, opened a window, and yelled at Bangs:

"I've blown your rudder off; you are at my mercy. Surrender and you will fare well; resist me again, and I'll send my craft under water beneath your hull and blow you up!"

"No surrender—no surrender!" frantically cried the ocean outlaws.

"Then you'll take the consequences!" cried Jack sternly.

A volley of rifle shots from the deck of the Phantom drove the boy back, and several of the glasses were shattered.

It was now impossible to submerge the boat, as the sea water was bound to pour in through the broken panes.

"Stern! Stern!" cried Jack, upon seeing this.

"Aye, aye!" came Tim's reply, as he complied.

"Haul off fifty yards!"

"Aye, aye!"

"I've given the scoundrels a fair chance to save their vessel!" exclaimed the boy, "and since they scorn it I will blow them to pieces."

CHAPTER XVII.

LOSS OF THE OCEAN PLUNGER.

The old sailor steered the Ocean Plunger away, and the boy hunched up on the turret, to the guns, the muzzles of which were pointed.

The searchlight went blazing upon the ship, and a few moments afterward the boy trained one of his guns to bear upon the vessel, and fired it.

A deafening report, a blinding gush of flame, and the shrill scream of the flying shot followed.

Within a moment the missile struck the Phantom, and with an appalling crash a shower of her timbers was hurled high in the air, while a chorus of terrified cries arose from her crew.

In the glare of the searchlight Jack saw that the after-deck of his enemies' boat was blown to pieces.

She was rapidly filling with water, and would inevitably go down now, as soon as she filled.

"Tim!" cried the boy.

"Aye, aye, lad!"

"Steer for the Phantom."

The Ocean Plunger ran up to her.

"Phantom ahoy!" hailed Jack.

"What now?" came the captain's reply.

"Do you surrender?"

"For heaven's sake take us off this craft!"

"Victory!" cried Jack. "We've got them now!"

He ordered Tim to run the Plunger alongside the demolished vessel, and then her crew were taken off one by one and bound.

They were stowed away down below, and the ship soon afterward sunk to the bottom of the sea.

"What are you going to do with the rascals?" asked Clark.

"Put them ashore in the hands of the crew of the Happy Hat-tie."

The boy questioned the sailor whom he had picked up, and ascertaining where his messmates had been landed, he ran the Plunger toward the place.

When morning dawned, they discerned the unfortunate crew on the coast, constructing several ice huts, and signaled to them.

When they drew near Jack landed his prisoners, and meeting the castaways, he explained to them what had occurred.

"We will take the prisoners," said one of them, "and we will form a court and try them for what they have done. They will meet their just deserts."

Jack shuddered at the sinister look on the speaker's face, for he saw delineated there a determination to convict and remorselessly kill every one who had sinned against them.

The rascals deserved the fate in store for them, Jack well knew, and turning the subject, he hastened to ask the man:

"What do you intend to do for yourselves?"

"Travel along the coast to Christianshab," promptly answered the man. "It's only one day's walk from here, and we are bound to be taken care of there by the governor until a homeward-bound ship comes along and carries us back to America."

"Is there anything we can do for you?"

"If you could spare us some food, clothing and weapons, we would be able to get along," the man answered.

"We have an abundance, and will supply you," said Jack promptly. "I will send the things ashore."

He bade the man good-by, and returning to the Ocean Plunger, he dispatched Fritz ashore with the necessary articles from the bountiful supply he carried on his boat.

The injured sailor went ashore to his companions, and leaving them to deal out the pirates' punishment according to their own sense of justice, the boy started the boat.

She left the sad scene behind her, and continued her journey.

Several stops were made along the coast, and inquiries begun, but none of the people they encountered had seen any signs of the missing crew of the wrecked Ice King.

The Ocean Plunger finally left Upernavic and headed for

Melville Bay, meeting with large masses of drift ice, overwhelmed by fierce snow storms, and after a month of incessant battling with the elements, she finally forced her way into Kane Basin.

Such bitterly cold weather as they now encountered was almost unbearable outside of the comfortable interior of the boat.

Kennedy Channel was all choked up with ice.

It was impossible to get through, and forced thus to wait until the ice broke up and drifted southward, the boy headed his boat for Cape Frazer off Grinnell Land to wait.

The days had grown very short, for the incessant Arctic night was fast settling over that north latitude.

"We will have to seek shelter in the bay south of the cape," said Jack to Fritz, as the boat went plunging along through the ice-strewn water. "There is no telling how long we may have to remain there, either, until we can get up through Kennedy's Channel on account of all the drift ice."

"Shiminey Christmas! S'posen ve haf to stay a year?" said Fritz.

"I doubt it, but it may extend over several months."

"Den vwhile ve vas vaitin' don't dose fellers vot ve coom to safe been frozen dot so ve von't find 'em?"

"They may have been dead long ago."

"Ach! Dot looks like a vild gooses chases."

"I hope not, Fritz."

The boat ran up under the lee of a cape just then, and they headed for a large bay of clear open water.

The shores were bleak and rocky that surrounded the place, with some leafless and stunted vegetation, among which gleamed patches of snow and ice.

The boat went dashing along toward a sheltered nook, the boy pointing at a plainly defined water line on the cliffs at one side.

It stood twenty feet above the sea level.

"Just see what enormously high tides they have here," said he.

"More as feeftteen foots rise," commented Fritz, in surprise.

"It's twenty, if an inch," asserted Jack.

"Den it low tides must now been alretty."

"No doubt of it. Port your helm."

"Vot's der matter now mit you, Shack?"

"Rocks ahead—don't you see them?"

"Holy smoke—yes!"

The wheel spun around in the fat boy's hands, for he saw some dangerous snags cropping up from the water ahead, and the Plunger went off on another tack.

It was evident that they were navigating in perilous waters.

Unfortunately for the boat, she was traveling at the rate of about twenty knots, and she had barely changed her course when there sounded a terrific rip and crash underneath.

A shock followed that knocked Jack and Fritz down on the floor, and the boat suddenly swung around.

In a moment Jack arose to his feet.

"We've fouled a rock!" he gasped.

"Donner vetter!" roared Fritz, getting up.

"Didn't you hear it scrape along the bottom?"

"Yah—und—mein cracious, Shack, vot's dot?"

The boy stopped the machinery, and a gurgling roar now reached his ears, coming up from the hold.

With many misgivings, the boy dashed from the pilot-house, and hastening down below, he was dismayed to see that the Plunger had run upon a submerged rock, which had torn a hole in the hull!

The gurgling sound came from a torrent of water that was rushing in through the jagged aperture, and rapidly filling the great water chamber of the boat.

She was then fast sinking.

Back to the pilot-house rushed Jack, where he found Tim and Clark anxiously asking what had happened.

The boy grasped a lever, and pulling it, he set the pumps in motion, emptying the water from the hold.

He could not throw the line out as fast as it came in, however, and he breathlessly explained what had happened.

"Our only means of saving the boat lies in beaching her before the water gets the best of us," said the boy.

He then started the propeller at full speed, and grasping the wheel, he steered the Plunger toward the shore.

It was about a mile distant.

"Get out our diving suits, Tim—we must put them on," said Jack, "for if we want to get at the leak, we will have to use them."

"Look out! We don't want another sunken rock!" warned Clark.

"We have no time to be particular, as only speed will save us."

Tim brought in the suits, and they put them on.

The Plunger kept sinking lower and lower every moment, until her decks were under water presently.

She had gained about half the distance to the shore, when suddenly the machinery began to work spasmodically.

A cry of disgust peeled from Jack.

The water has reached the battery wires," he cried, "and the current is flowing into the water."

"She von't go on now!" gasped Fritz.

"No," cried Tim; "but she's a-goin' down!"

"Save yourselves!" yelled Clark.

Jack had just time to stop the machinery and run out on the deck after his friends, when the Ocean Plunger suddenly began to sink from beneath their feet.

Down she went, sinking toward the bottom, leaving the four friends floating on the surface in their diving suits.

CHAPTE XVIII.

UNDER THE SEA.

The air confined in the knapsacks on the backs of the four divers buoyed them up on the surface, and it was with a feeling of the most intense despair that they saw the Plunger sink.

She went straight down to the bottom.

"Gone!" cried Jack, in agitated tones. "She's sunk, boys!"

"Donner und blitzen! how ve away from here vas get now?" Fritz cried, with a feeling of the blankest alarm.

"She must be down in more than thirty feet of water, as her smokestacks ain't to be seen," commented the reporter glumly.

"Thar ain't no use in us heavin' anchor here, my hearties," exclaimed Tim. "Take ther bearin's o' this spot, an' let us tack ter leeward. Here's a landmark ter steer by in case we wants ter come out here again ter ther wreck."

"What do you allude to?" questioned the young inventor.

"Save ye, jest squint ashore, an' ye kin see that we are about quarter o' a mile from ther low tide mark. Ther craft are sunken plumb on a line wi' that big rock on shore wot looks like a cross."

The position of the boat was thus ascertained.

Then they began to swim ashore and soon left the water.

It was fortunate that none of them were burdened down with weights, else they would have gone to the bottom.

Landing in front of the queer-shaped rock, they got out of reach of the surf, and a discussion of their situation ensued. Meantime the tide arose.

It came up so high that they had to retreat.

Up the rocks they clambered, and passing the shore line for high tide, they mounted the highest point and surveyed the scene.

This section of the shore was rocky and wooded.

Night fell upon the scene, and they lay under the shelter of an overhanging rock, and, posting a guard, went to sleep.

On the following day they were aroused early, but got no breakfast, and began to devise a course of procedure.

When every one but Jack advanced his idea, Tim asked of him:

"What d'you think o' doin' now, Jack?"

"Try to raise the wreck," the boy replied promptly.

Every one gazed at him in surprise, upon hearing this bold declaration, for they did not dream that such a thing could be done, positive as Jack spoke.

"I don't see how we are going to manage it," said Clark.

"Why, it's the simplest thing in the world," replied Jack smilingly. "That is," he added, "if the boat isn't sunk too deep. All we need to do is to weight our bodies, and wade out to her. If she is accessible, all I need do is to penetrate the water chamber, and stop up the hole rent in the hull, then pump the water out of her, when she will rise to the surface by the buoyancy of her air chambers, when we can float her ashore and strand her. When the tide recedes we can mend the broken part."

All hands fell in with this plan at once.

Each of them secured a heavy stone to weight himself down under water, and having prepared their diving suits, they followed the boy, wading out under the bay.

Their helmet lamps were started.

In this manner they headed for the spot where the Plunger had gone down, and were surprised to find the water was getting warmer the lower they descended.

This was not strange, however, for in the Polar seas the temperature increases with the depth in certain limits, and thus assists in fusing the lower part of the surface ice.

It is well known that snow and ice are bad conductors of heat, as is shown by its keeping the earth warm in the winter time.

The temperature of the surface was fifty-three degrees below zero, while thirty-two feet lower down it was only twenty-nine.

The general temperature of the sea's bottom is uniform all over the world, and differs little from thirty-two degrees, or five above freezing.

Our friends had no means of ascertaining how deep they were down, but by the time they reached the boat there were eighty feet of water above their heads with the tide out.

The bottom of the sea from the shore outward was very peculiar in appearance, for they covered a bed of yielding white sand, from which there arose a forest of towering rocks as black as ink, and shaped like monoliths.

In order to reach the point they were heading for, they had to wind among these singular formations in single file, and there observed a peculiar scene.

Submarine plants of brilliant colors and strange shapes festooned the rocks, aquatic vegetables and curious shells were strewn over the sand, and innumerable fishes of grotesque and of ordinary forms floated around them, their scales glistening with variegated hues as the lights of their helmet lamps slanted upon their gliding bodies.

Led on by Jack, they finally reached the boat.

She stood jammed in between two of the cone-shaped rocks referred to, at a height of twenty feet from the bottom, and in order to reach her the four had to climb up the rocks.

To accomplish this they had to drop their rock weights, and by clinging to the rocks let their knapsacks lift them.

One after the other they thus reached the boat, and getting over to the pilot-house by clinging to the hurricane deck,

Jack got into the boat, and making his way into the store-room, he secured some leaden weights for their suits.

Putting on a set, he brought his friends theirs, and they commenced to adjust them, when Fritz dropped his accidentally, and away he shot toward the surface like a cork.

Up the fat boy had to go, whether he wanted to or not, his three companions laughing heartily over the mishap.

When they were weighted, they followed Jack inside.

Well knowing that Fritz was in no danger, they troubled themselves no further about the Dutch boy, but closed up all the doors and windows of the boat.

The broken window had been repaired.

There were dampers at the tops of the smokestacks, and ventilators which were worked by levers in the engine room, and Jack shut them.

Now, there was no means of the sea water getting inside save by the opening ripped in the hull, and they examined this.

It was a large and jagged aperture.

In order to hermetically close it, Jack saw that he would have to rivet a steel plate over it.

The work upon this was accordingly done, and they kept at it several hours, Fritz joining them in the meantime, after being obliged to go ashore, get a new weight, and wade out again.

By the time the aperture was covered, Jack observed that the air in his knapsack was getting exhausted.

Resorting to the deaf and dumb alphabet, he signaled Tim:

"We must hurry—my air supply is giving out."

"Mine, too!" replied the old sailor, in the same way.

Jack made a dash for the pilot-house, and pulled the pump lever to empty the boat of the water she had shipped.

The machinery worked rapidly.

But the air in the four knapsacks was going faster, as they just held a certain quantity.

A strangling feeling took possession of Jack, for the air was now injected from the knapsack to the helmet in spasmodic gusts and made him gasp.

The blood rushed to the boy's head, a fearfully oppressive feeling took possession of his lungs, and his eyes started, his pulse grew feeble, and a blindness overcame him.

He felt so faint and weak that he reeled back and fell headlong to the floor.

Then he lost all consciousness, his thoughts dying out with the frantic hope of:

"Was the boat ascending?"

If it was wedged by the rocks so that its ascent was prevented, every one of them was bound to perish.

The boy had hardly fallen when Tim came staggering in blindly, and saw the recumbent figure of the boy.

"Dead!" he gasped.

He fell upon his knees beside Jack.

By a violent effort he rallied his faculties, and glaring out the window, he saw that the boat was yet motionless, that although the pumps were working furiously and emptying the boat, she did not rise.

A groan of terror broke from Tim's lips.

He burst into a cold, clammy perspiration.

"Heavenly Father, save us!" he cried, raising his clasped hands.

His own air supply was all gone by this time, and he began to strangle, and fell over upon the floor writhing and struggling in a fearful paroxysm of desperation.

In the midst of it Fritz appeared in the doorway, dragging the figure of Clark after him.

The indicator on the wall denoted a depth of sixty feet below the surface of the sea.

"Fritz!" cried the old sailor, seeing the Dutch boy.

He held out his hands supplicatingly, and his voice was drowned inside of his helmet.

Of course the fat boy could not hear him, but Tim saw him drop Clark and rush in.

Everything seemed to whirl around in front of the old sailor, and, almost black in the face, he suddenly gave way to asphyxiation and fell over.

CHAPTER XIX.

CUTTING-IN A WHALE.

"He lives!"

It was Clark who uttered this joyful cry.

The Plunger had reached the surface of the sea.

Tim and Fritz stood beside the reporter as he bent over Jack.

It was a fortunate thing that Clark was something of a doctor, for Jack was in a bad way when the boat finally rose to the surface and Fritz opened their helmets.

The sailor and reporter were the first to revive, but Fritz had not lost his senses for a moment, owing to the fact that he had plenty of air in his knapsack at the time.

It so happened that when Fritz rose to the surface when he lost his stone weight he shut off his air supply, and thus economized the amount by which he did not suffer with the rest.

Jack soon recovered and sat up on the pilot-house floor, very much amazed to find the boat on the surface and all hands saved.

All the water had been pumped out of the boat, and she now floated as buoyantly as ever.

When explanations had been made the young inventor descended into a water chamber and examined the patch.

It was water-tight and perfectly secure.

Nothing more was necessary to be done.

While he was so engaged a shrill whistle sounded in the speaking tube communicating with the pilot-house.

"Hello!" he called back.

"Coom ub gwick!" replied Fritz.

"What's the matter now?"

"A shibs vas yust coom in der bay alretty."

Wondering what the vessel was, Jack returned to the pilot-house, and saw a large whale ship rushing around the cape.

It was not a steamer, and she did not have any sails raised, yet, strange enough, she was forging rapidly through the water, and all her crew were on deck.

He made out her name to be the Harpooner.

"By Jove! Do you see that, boys?" exclaimed Jack in surprise.

"What the deuce is propelling her?" asked Clark in astonished tones.

"Maybe she vas got a brobeller und cleedritcity," suggested Fritz.

"Git out!" said Tim. "She's a sailor, an' thar's why she's a-goin'—cast yer weather eye athwart her bow, an' ye will sight a harpoon line runnin' on ahead o' her. A whale's got her in tow."

"Tim is right!" exclaimed Jack. "I see it myself."

"I oughter know somethin' about them 'ere things," said the old sailor proudly, "fer I once harpooned a sperm whale from ther deck o' ther ole frigate Wabash. We wuz at anchor, an' ther whale started off, an' pulled ther flukes o' ther anchor up, an' dragged 'em arter ther man-o'-war."

"That must have been a pretty big whale," dryly remarked Clark.

"Aye, now—it measured two hundred feet long, an' fifty feet girth. Pretty soon it turned aroun', an' seein' ther anchor,

thought it wuz a fishhook, snapped at it, an' o' course it got ketched. As my harpoon struck forrard o' its tail, ye kin see as we had a bow an' starn line on it when it swallowed ther anchor. That made it helpless, an' I got down on its back wi' my blubber spade, an' dug a big trench in its body, filled it wi' a keg o' powder, stuck in a slow match, lit it, an' she busted."

"Killed it, of course," sarcastically said Clark.

"Lordy, no. Ther powder only blowed ther harpoon outer it, an' the explosion made it vomit up ther anchor, an' it got away."

"Is that all?"

"Aye, that's all."

Every one laughed, and Clark looked very much disgusted.

The reporter might have expressed his disbelief in Tim's story in very strong terms had Jack not interposed just then with:

"There she blows! There blows!"

An enormous whale had come up in the water ahead of the ship and was spouting blood.

It started away, and the harpoon line which fastened it suddenly snapped in two, and it rushed away free.

Down went a boat from the davits of the ship, in tumbled its crew, and away they rowed after the escaping whale, bent upon its recapture at any hazard.

The whale came straight toward the Ocean Plunger, and the pursuing boat began to rapidly overhaul it.

Straight toward the Plunger dashed the leviathan, and before our friends suspected its intention, the monster suddenly collided with the boat.

The shock sent the Plunger spinning, and keeping straight ahead, the whale rushed on and struck a shoal.

Its flight was checked.

Stranded now in ten feet of water, the hapless monster lay there beating the sea into foam with its tail and fins, and the boat came flying up to it, her crew uttering an exultant shout.

Dashing straight toward the whale, the seamen plied their deadly lances, and the furious struggles turned the whale so that it was enabled to get out into deep water again.

Here the combat was resumed with intense fury, as two more boats had put out from the ship, and three harpoons were planted into the enormous body of the whale.

Within a short time the whale was killed.

The victorious sailors towed it over to their ship, and here it was secured alongside, ready for cutting in.

A chain around the bitts held the upturned monster alongside, and huge blocks were rove to the fore and main mast-heads, to which the cutting-in tackle was then fastened.

A stage was rigged down, upon which the captain and his mates went, with breast-ropes to lean upon, and long-handled spades were handed to them, with which they began to chop the blubber from the carcass.

The lower lip was secured to a blubber-hook, stripped off and hoisted aboard by a windlass; then followed the fore-fins, the upper lip and the upper jaw, along with the whale-bone which strains the creature's food.

The lower jaw and throat followed, with the tongue, which weighed about two thousand pounds, and then the blubber of the body was cut and pulled off in great strips, as the carcass rolled over and over.

As soon as a piece nearly reaching to the mainmast was raised to the deck, the crew attacked it with big boarding knives, and cutting a hole in it even with the deck, they thrust in the strop and toggle of the cutting-in blocks, and severed a piece from the rest.

This was lowered into the blubber-room between decks, where several men cut it into seven or eight pound pieces to stow away.

The blubber was from nine to twelve inches thick, and looked like chunks of fat pork, somewhat discolored.

Attracted by the odor, thousands of sea birds came from far and near, and sharks and other fishes swarmed around the carcass, to devour as much as they could steal of it.

No sooner was the last morsel of blubber taken aboard and the tackle hoisted in, when the carcass sunk to rise no more.

Then the trying-out process began, briefly, as follows:

The blubber men cut up the pieces down below, others pitched it through the hatch up on deck, others forked it over to the try kettles, and two men with mincing knives cut it in small fragments.

Boat steerers and mates flung it in the kettles, fed the fires under them with scraps, and bailed the oil boiled out of the blubber into copper tanks, from which it was dipped into the casks and stowed away.

Two hundred casks of oil were taken from that whale.

The deck of the ship presented a spectacle which whalemens love, their arms and faces begrimed and sooty and smeared with oil, the planks strewn with grease and scraps, and every one was busy and full of life and animation.

While this was going on, Jack launched one of his boats, and was rowed over to the whaler by Tim, and boarded her.

The captain was a Nantucket Yankee, and he greeted him cordially, saying they were having a good season, as whales were plentiful, and stated that he had picked up a couple of castaways down the coast, who claimed to have escaped from a wreck.

Jack then detailed his own history.

"I'm going up Kennedy's Channel myself when the ice clears," said the captain, "so we will be company for each other."

"I am delighted to hear it, Captain Rigby," said the boy, using the name the captain gave him. "In these solitudes there is nothing so agreeable as the company of human beings."

At that moment two of the blubber cutters who had been down below came up on deck, and the captain pointed at them.

"There are the two castaways I picked up near——"

"Ha! I know them!" cried Jack in surprise.

A dark frown gathered on the boy's brow.

For one of the men was Philip Bangs.

The other was his first mate.

It was very evident these precious rascals had made their escape from the crew into whose hands Jack had put them for punishment, and seeing the Harpooner passing, got aboard of her.

They glanced up, saw Jack, and recoiled, uttering cries of alarm, and turning as pale as death.

"Jack Wright!" gasped Bangs.

"You see they know me, sir," said Jack to Captain Rigby.

"We are lost now!" cried Bangs' mate.

"Who are these men—enemies of yours?" asked Rigby.

"They are murderers—they are Captain Bangs and his mate of the whaler Phantom, whose villainy I told you about."

A cry of surprise pealed from the honest skipper's lips.

"Great heaven!" he exclaimed. "Is that so? They have deceived me."

For a minute a deathly silence ensued.

Then Captain Rigby exclaimed:

"Can it be possible these are the scoundrels you mentioned?"

"Aye," replied Jack. "It is evident that they have escaped from the men whom they so cruelly wronged."

"How easily they deceived me! But they are at my mercy now."

"Not yet!" hissed Bangs vehemently, for he saw that he was in a very dangerous position, and the thought rendered him desperate.

The captain pointed at them, and turned to his men.

"Make prisoners of those rascals!" he shouted.

Several of the crew sprang toward the culprits to obey this order, when Bangs and his mate climbed upon the bulwork.

"Yer'll never take us alive!" the captain yelled.

"Look out or they'll escape!" shouted Jack.

"Aye, that we will!" hissed Bangs determinedly.

The sailors hastened to get their hands upon the villains, but before they came within ten feet of them Bangs and his mate dove down into the icy sea and disappeared.

"Gone!"

It was the chagrined captain who uttered this cry, and every one dashed to the bulwarks and peered over.

When they saw the fugitives they were fifty yards away, and swimming furiously for the shore.

"Clear away a boat!" cried the captain.

"Don't wait; use mine!" interposed Jack.

"Good! See if you can overhaul those rascals, boys!"

Down into Jack's boat went a crew of four men, and away they rowed at full speed.

Unfortunately, the shore was only a short distance away, and the two fugitives being strong swimmers, soon reached it.

They got upon the land before the boats came in dangerous proximity, and dodging behind the rocks, disappeared.

The chase had been in vain.

"Haul to, my lads!" cried Tim, who had been steering.

"What for?" queried one of the rowers.

"We can't overhaul 'em now, nohow."

"Aye, it seems so; but we might run after them."

"It's of no use—they've got too much start on us."

Reluctantly the sailors brought their oars apeak, and a moment afterwards their captain yelled from the ship:

"Come about. It won't do any good to go further."

The sailors obeyed, and rowed the boat back to the ship.

"They ain't much better off now than they would have been if they submitted to arrest," said Jack reflectively. "It don't look as if there were any means of sustaining life on that cape, and they will very likely perish of starvation."

"Let them. I'm glad you exposed their villainy," said the captain. "There's no telling what they might have done to us if we had kept them aboard of this craft long."

The boy then took his leave of the skipper, and entering his boat, Tim rowed him back to the Plunger, where he recited to his friends what had occurred.

Fritz had a good meal prepared for them presently, and as the anchor was hove, they turned in after a while.

Three weeks were passed in this locality, and then it was ascertained that a passage could be made up the channel, and preparations were then made for departure.

On the following morning when Jack came out on deck, he was astonished to find that the Harpooner had mysteriously disappeared during the night.

"Strange that they should have gone off without bidding us good-by," he remarked to Fritz, who was on duty. "However, as they are gone, we had better lose no time following their example, as there is no knowing how long the channel will remain open."

CHAPTER XX.

THE ICE KING.

The two exposed rascals crouched back against the railing and glared at Jack and the captain with the looks of hunted beasts, and the crew paused in their work, overwhelmed with curiosity over the strange scene then occurring.

"You vant dot I stard me dis poat now?" queried Fritz.

"I'll attend to that while you prepare our breakfast."

Tim and Clark now joined the boy, and while Fritz was engaged at his culinary operations, the anchor was raised, and Jack, assuming control of the Plunger, started her off.

She passed around the cape and ran up into the channel, down which great ice floes were drifting.

The shore was hedged by this ice to a width of a mile, and as they opened up the channel the young inventor caught sight of a ship which was jammed in between the shore and the great ice field, as if the floe had nipped it.

It was evident that the current was carrying the boat along to the southward with the ice, and Jack scanned it with a glass.

To his amazement he saw it was the Harpooner.

Wondering how she happened to get caught in such a fix he saw that the nature of the ice made it utterly impossible for them to get anywhere near her.

Not until there was a general breaking up of the floe could this have been done, and the boy then intently studied the men he saw upon her deck.

What was his astonishment when he found that all the crew were dispersed along the bulwarks immovably.

A closer scrutiny showed him that they were bound there.

Two men were walking about the deck.

They proved to be Bangs and his mate.

"By thunder, I see through it now!" cried the boy excitedly. "Those rascals have overpowered the crew of the Harpooner by some cunning scheme, and are now masters of the whaler. No doubt they will sail her back to the civilized world and thus escape. Oh, if I only had a chance to reach them! To do so now, however, is impossible. They are watching us with glasses now. They realize their security, and they are doubtless delighted."

"Wot's that ye're a-sayin', my lad?" queried Tim.

The boy explained the matter to the old fellow, arousing his indignation, and as they had to keep on moving ahead in order to avoid the ice floe, they presently left the ship far astern, where it ultimately disappeared from view.

Pursuing the channel, they found it open, as most of the ice was adrift there, and they lost no time in pushing ahead, the sharp ram now serving them in good stead.

They reached the Hall Basin.

Thus far the worst of their journey was accomplished, but thousands of vexations, misfortunes and perilous adventures befell them in the interim, which we have no space here to describe.

By the time the ram was headed into Robeson Channel the light of day had vanished, and the gloom of nine months of perpetual night had settled down upon that section of the earth.

The weather had been steadily growing colder as they went on, and finally they came to the region of glaciers and crimson snow—great blotches of red showing here and there on the frozen landscape in strong contrast to the surrounding dazzling whiteness that prevailed everywhere.

This phenomena was caused by the presence of a certain berry growing beneath the snow and dyeing it.

Mountainous bergs were encountered now, and the boat had frequently to cut her way through the floating ice.

"If we can finish our investigations before the southward flow of ice ceases," said Jack to his friends one dark morning, "we will not have so much trouble to get back to the southward again. Our chief outlook now must be to save our boat from getting nipped."

"There's no place north of Fort Conger where we can hope to glean any information about the crew of the Ice King, is there?" asked Clark anxiously. "I ain't aware of any settlements being up here."

"Our only hope is to get news from the Esquimaux."

"Und dere don't vos much out dose vellers up here," said Fritz.

"Only a few wandering tribes."

"Then we'll ha' ter keep a sharp lookout," said Tim.

This plan was accordingly followed, and on the second day afterwards the searchlight was sweeping the coast of Greenland, and Jack was at the wheel, when the light suddenly flickered upon a dark object lying among the rocks on shore.

Jack intently studied it, and soon made it out to be the wreck of a large ship lying jammed in the rocks.

He called the attention of his friends to the fact, and as there was an open sheet of water leading over to it, he turned the Plunger over to leeward.

She ran in toward the wreck, and as they drew nearer to it, the young inventor gave a violent start, and cried:

"Hurrah! Hurrah!"

"Hurrah fer wot?" queried Tim.

"That wreck."

"Wot fer?"

"It's the lost Ice King!"

"Hey?"

"I plainly see her name now!"

They had arrived at the place where the ill-fated craft had been lost, and wild with 'anxious excitement the boat was rapidly driven shoreward toward the wreck.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE LIVING AND THE DEAD.

Jack brought the Plunger to a pause a cable's length from the bleak, rocky shore upon which the wreck of the Ice King lay, and left the electric light blazing upon it.

The name of the craft was plainly discernible in big white letters upon the bow of the boat, and they also observed that there were several gaping holes torn in her planking.

No doubt the boat was beyond being repaired, as there were no facilities in that bleak region for any such work, and as her masts were broken off, her bowsprit was gone, and all her seams had sprung open, she was unfit for use, anyway.

"Sure enough, thar she is, lads," cried Tim, "an' a sorry wreck she is, to be sure. But whar is her crew?"

"That's the question," said Clark. "She was deserted when last she was seen by the whaler who reported her loss. Finding her won't do us any more good than to substantially prove her loss. We will have to look further for her crew."

"How in dunder ve know vhere dey vos?" demanded Fritz.

"Let us go ashore and examine her, anyway," suggested Jack.

The rest heartily agreed to this proposition, and as soon as the Ocean Plunger was anchored, a boat was launched, all four got in, and they rowed into a sheltered lagoon.

Here a landing was made, the boat was hauled upon the beach, and, led by Jack, they marched around to the wreck.

As they came out into the clearing in which the wreck stood, they were startled by hearing a blood-curdling howling.

It was taken up by another voice, then another, and still more, and within a few minutes a terrific chorus arose.

The searchlight on the Plunger out in the water had been left blazing upon the wreck, and by its light they saw scores of flying black figures and eyes that burned in the gloom like live coals of fire.

Jack halted and recoiled.

"To your weapons!" he cried thrillingly.

"What is it?" hoarsely asked Clark.

"Wolves!" replied the boy.

"Lord! Thar's a million on 'em!" cried Tim.

"Gief me a shots at dem!" Fritz implored.

They had all been wise enough to carry their rifles, and they now leveled them at the gaunt, hairy figures of the skulking beasts that were swarming about the wreck, and began to fire round after round of shots at them.

A terrific clamor arose as the wolves fled in all directions, and a few minutes afterwards they heard their howls dying away in the distance.

"There must have been a reason for those ravenous beasts swarming around here," said Jack. "They would not have been drawn together in such vast numbers unless they scented food of some kind in the neighborhood."

"I don't vos see vot dey could to ead got aroundt dis blace," said Fritz, "unless dey shvallow dot wrecks or dose gobble stones alretty."

"Hark!" interposed Clark, holding up his finger. "What is that?"

They all listened.

"It was a human voice!" exclaimed Jack presently. "I heard it."

"Aye!" assented Tim, "an' thar it is ag'in."

Faint and weak were the tones, but they distinctly heard:

"Help—for God's sake! Help!"

The sound came from within the wreck.

"That's what drew those brutes here," commented Jack.

All of them heard the imploring appeal, and rushed for the wreck to find out who had uttered it.

They could easily pass through any of the holes that were torn through the planks of the wreck, and as plenty of light was also admitted from the searchlight, they could distinguish everything in the vessel's hold.

Not a soul met their view, but they plainly saw that the place was littered with boxes and barrels, and soon found that the sound came from above.

Jack mounted the ladder in the hatchway amidships.

It brought him out between decks, and guided by the faint, hoarse cries, he made his way toward the bow and passed through a door into the forecabin.

Some light streamed through the round windows, and gave him a view of a pitiful scene.

There were several men wasted to skeletons lying in the bunks in the forecabin, attired in scanty garments.

The fallen jaws and starting eyes of several plainly indicated that death had claimed them, but three of the eight were apparently alive yet, but too weak to move.

As the boy appeared, he heard them gasp:

"Food! Food! We are dying!"

A cold chill shot through the boy.

"Poor wretches—they are starving!" he muttered.

His friends came up a moment afterwards, and he hastily dispatched Clark to the Plunger for some things.

Then he approached one of the men.

"Cheer up, poor fellow!" he exclaimed. "We will care for you!"

"Thank heaven!" murmured the half-dead man.

"Who are you, anyway?" the boy inquired.

"I am the captain of this craft—the Ice King."

Had a bomb exploded among them, our friends could scarcely have been more startled than they were to hear this.

"The very ones we are after!" cried Jack.

"We have had no food in two weeks," groaned the man.

"Hush!" said Jack in pitying tones. "Don't waste your strength talking. You can explain yourself after we have nursed you back to your strength."

Clark came back presently with the things Jack sent for, and they began operations upon the sufferers at once.

Nothing could be done in a minute.

Indeed, it was a week before the three survivors of the wrecked explorer were revived enough to leave the wreck, and even then they were so weak and emaciated that our friends had to almost carry them to the boat.

But once on board the Plunger they were better off, as they could there enjoy the comfortable warmth which they were without on board of the wreck.

The bodies of the five dead men were buried so that the wolves could not dig them up again.

Our friends had accomplished their mission.

They returned on board of the Plunger, and going into the stateroom, the boy saw that the rescued captain was then capable of holding a protracted conversation, and, as the rest grouped about him, the boy sat down beside the bunk and asked:

"Will you give an account of yourself now, Captain?"

"Most willingly," was the man's reply. "I have been very anxious to do so for some time, but refrained, as you saw how weak I was. The account of our troubles date back to the time we first made an effort to penetrate to this region. There are so many details——"

"Just confine yourself to the meagre facts, sir."

"Very well. Suffice it, then, that the Ice King reached this locality and was nipped by the ice and flung ashore here. Determined to carry out our mission of proving the truth of Dr. Hayes' report that there was an open polar sea, we resolved to continue our journey. A party was made up, sledges procured, and equipping ourselves for a long ice journey, we abandoned the ship and set out.

"Ah! Then it must have been during your absence on that trip that the remains of your ship were discovered by a whaler who brought the news to civilization, and caused us to start off to your relief," said Jack.

"Was the wreck discovered?" cried the captain, in deep surprise. "You astonish me! Well, anyway, this craft——"

"Oh, we were offered a reward of \$50,000 by the newspaper which started you off, to go in search of you," interposed Jack smilingly, "and you see how successful we are."

"Had you not come when you did," was the earnest reply of the invalid, "we three would have perished. As it is, you have saved our lives. But, to continue my narrative. Our sledging party set out, and after months of hardships we finally discovered that Dr. Hayes' had told the truth, as we found the open polar sea he described.

"The return journey was disastrous. Scurvy and hardships carried off most of my men. But eight of us returned to this wreck alive, only to find that the wild beasts had been ravaging our stock of food. But little remained, and when it was used up starvation began. We were in the last extreme when you rescued us, for, as you are aware, five of my poor friends perished."

"You have got a detailed account of your journey?"

"Everything is written in my journal."

"Then as there is nothing further to keep us in this place," said Jack, "we will raise our anchors and head for the south again before the ice chokes up the channel and locks us in here."

"The sooner you go, the better."

The rest concurred with this view of the situation, and Jack therefore put his plan in immediate operation.

CHAPTER XXII.

ALMOST WRECKED.

"Port your helm, on your life, port your helm, Tim!"

It was Jack's frantic voice that rang out above the furious storm that was raging in Baffin's Bay a month later.

The Ocean Plunger was caught in the midst of a breaking floe; the wind had sent a gigantic iceberg along in a swift current, and it came charging on the floe.

Along it swept, bearing down upon the field of ice, into which the Ocean Plunger was entangled, sweeping everything remorselessly before it.

The sea rose up in a foamy wall before the charge of the berg, the ice was crackling and splitting, a wild dirge arose from the gale as it roared over the jagged pinnacles, and a mixture of rain and snow was beating down.

There was not much chance for the boat to get out of the way.

Night, black and dreadful, had settled down.

Tim glanced anxiously ahead.

A small channel had caught Jack's glance, and as the old sailor obeyed the boy's order, the boat rushed into the clear water, under full power.

She might have made her escape if she had a few minutes more, but hardly had her hull left the entangling ice, when the berg struck the floe in back of her.

The grinding crash that followed was awful.

Its noise rose above the din of the storm and could be heard miles away, and as the startled crew of the Plunger glanced back, a terrible sight met their view.

The berg had ripped the floe all up, as if a great bomb was tearing its way through the ice.

A vast shower of broken ice and frothy water flew up in the air and kept rolling up as the berg advanced.

It flew in all directions, battering the Plunger like a hail, and sent the smokestacks down.

The ventilators went by the board with them, and the two guns were torn from their lashings, and were swept by a great wave down upon the deck with a terrific shock.

The wonder was that they did not smash through.

Buried in a deluge of ice and water, every one of her glass windows were smashed to fragments, the iron work on her deck bent and twisted out of shape, and her boats were smashed to pieces. The Plunger looked like a wreck.

A moment after this havoc was created a cry burst from Jack of:

"Look out! The berg is falling!"

The mountain of ice behind them was two hundred feet high, and they saw it rocking and swaying, and finally it went over and struck the sea.

It seemed to be the crowning event of the series of misfortunes that had overtaken the boat, for it gave rise to a vast tidal wave that rose like an engulfing wall all around three sides of the injured boat.

In a short space of time it struck the boat.

For an instant Jack feared it might breach over the Plunger, and drive her down under the sea to her destruction, but instead of that it swept her up high on its crest.

She was carried along with it for some distance, the water roaring and hissing underneath her like a boiling chaldron, and then she plunged down in the trough.

Here a mass of ice was flung over her that left little of her deck works to be seen, and it seemed for a brief space as if she would capsize with the weight.

The battering waves had knocked her over, and she listed to one side, when a billow struck down upon her, and drove her under the water.

She did not sink, however.

Her hull was yet intact, and the flat shape of her deck saved her, for the ice was carried off, and she came up on the surface again far away from the floe.

It was some time before her occupants recovered from the stunning effects of the pounding she had received, but when Jack's wife returned, and he looked out of one of the port

holes and saw what damage was done, he shook his head with a dismayed look, and shouted:

"She's afloat yet, but her deck works are gone."

"Name a plan ter foller!" roared Tim.

"There none but to run with the wind."

"Then here she goes as fast as she kin."

He reached for a lever, pulled it, and away raced the Plunger free of the ice on deck, yet pounded all over her hull every moment by the cakes floating in the water.

Perhaps, after all, running was all that saved her from destruction, for she thus outstripped the broken floe, and gaining clearer water once more, she made better progress.

They ran all night, but so much water was shipped that the boat threatened to sink unless they had put the pumps in motion, and kept them furiously working.

They were out of the land of the midnight sun now, and when day broke over the desolate scene the storm abated, and they gained some daylight through a rift in the clouds that was a welcome boon to them.

The force of the waves moderated.

"Land ho! Land ho!"

It was Clark who uttered this welcome cry.

"Where away?" eagerly uttered the young inventor.

"Straight ahead."

"It must be the Greenland coast."

"Shall I steer for it?" queried Tim eagerly.

"Yes, yes! As close as I can calculate, we must be somewhere near Frederickshaab," replied Jack, "and we have got to make a landing somewhere to repair the Plunger, or she'll founder."

The old sailor nodded and steered for the land.

Several hours afterwards they drew close to a rocky shore, lined with verdure, and went down the coast until a small cave was sighted.

Into this Tim ran the boat.

It was a sheltered nook, and well adapted to their needs, but the tide was low, and they had to wait for it to rise in order to beach the boat high and dry.

There was a desolate look about the place which would have been intolerable, but for the swarms of birds hovering over the rocks and the few wandering seals that lay along the shore.

By this time the sun shone out.

All traces of the storm had passed away, and as soon as the tide came up they ran the Plunger into the shoals and anchored her upon a sandy bottom.

Here they waited for the tide to recede.

After supper the boat lay high and dry, and the boy went outside and made an inspection of her.

She was in a badly battered condition, her smokestacks, ventilators, skylights, boats and various other things being gone.

The hull was intact, save where they had patched it, and this was fastened again with rivets, while the port glasses were replaced with new ones from the storeroom.

The machinery was out of order, and while Fritz was down below fixing it Jack and the rest cleared away the remains of the wreckage from the decks.

It was, of course, impossible to replace anything but the smallest details, but they managed to put the deck in condition to withstand the rest of the journey home, by which time Fritz had the machinery in order again, and the tide turned to come in.

Wearied by their work, our friends saw the light of day breaking in the east, and they were about to go below to gain some much-needed rest, when Jack was startled by seeing a ship come sailing into the cove.

"It's the Harpooner!" he cried, upon recognizing her.

A cry of joy pealed from Jack.

"This is fate!" he exclaimed.

"Wot are we a-goin' ter do about it?" queried Tim.

"Arm yourselves."

"Holy shiminey! Dere's goin' ter been a fight!" cried Fritz.

"Slip the anchor, boys, and get ready now!" Jack shouted.

The rescued sailors of the Ice King rushed out on deck to obey this order, for they had entirely recovered by this time, and Tim and Fritz went after the arms and ammunition.

The young inventor took charge of the wheel.

"Retribution!" he muttered grimly. "I will either capture or kill those rascals now! Hey! All ready, out there?"

"All ready, sir!" was the reply, as the anchor was let go.

"An' here's ther arms!" panted Tim, bringing them in.

The boy pulled a lever, and away dashed the Plunger after the fugitive ship.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CONCLUSION.

"Harpooner, ahoy!"

"Ahoy, there!"

"Haul to, on your lives!"

"Never!"

"Then we will make you!"

"Come on—we're ready for you!"

This dialogue passed between Jack and Captain Bangs as the Ocean Plunger chased the Harpooner out on the open sea.

The young inventor's boat seemed to work fairly well after the overhauling she received, and the boy sent her flying after the whaling ship at full speed.

She rapidly bore down upon the Harpooner, when Jack saw that Bangs had lashed the wheel amidships, and with his mate was loading a dozen or more rifles.

It was evident that the rascals were desperate.

A curious smile flitted over Jack's face.

"He don't know my power," he muttered.

"They're a-goin' ter make a hot fight of it," said Tim.

"Don't flurry yourself. I will settle the whole matter with two bullets," the boy replied. "Bring me my suit of armor, Fritz."

The Dutch boy replied, and Jack selected one of his peculiar rifles, saw that it was in good working order, and putting the wheel in Tim's hands, he put on the suit.

It fit him like a glove, and was perfectly bullet proof.

Taking up his rifle and giving the old sailor instructions of how he wanted the boat steered, the boy opened the door and passed out on deck.

Mounting the ladder to the top of the pilot-house, he attracted his enemy's attention by shouting:

"This is your last chance, Bangs! Will you surrender?"

"Yer've got my answer," roared the captain, "an' here's where I gits even wi' yer fer ther shot yer gave me in ther arm."

Both he and his companions aimed their rifles at the boy, and fired so skillfully that the bullets hit him.

With a metallic ring, however, they glanced off his armor without hurting him in the least.

The boy then raised his rifle.

"Look out! It is my turn now!" he cried.

Then he fired two shots in rapid succession.

Each of the rascals were hit by the dead shot, and fell howling to the deck of the Harpooner.

Following Jack's instructions, Tim ran the Plunger alongside of the whaler, and the boy went on board, followed by Clark and Fritz, who were armed with handcuffs.

"Fasten those scoundrels!" said Jack, pointing at them.

Despite the frantic struggles of the wounded men, they were shackled and carried aboard of the Plunger.

Jack then went through the ship, and in the forecastle he found Captain Rigby and his crew.

They were bound hand and foot and lay on the floor.

Their joy upon beholding Jack Wright was so intense that despite the misery they were in they uttered a cheer.

Jack released them.

Cramped and sick from their long confinement, it was some time ere they could move about and get on deck.

Jack related to them what had befallen him, and in return the captain said:

"We have had a terrible time of it since we parted with you off Cape Frazer. The night before Bangs and his mate swam out to this ship, and overcoming the watch, bound them fast. They then came down below armed with pistols, and while Bangs threatened to kill us if we stirred, his friend bound us. We were nipped by the ice next day, and carried southward. Since then the two rascals have kept us confined, and have treated us horribly. Most of the time they have been coasting slowly southward, with the avowed intention of marooning us, and finally selling the ship and cargo.

"Well," laughed Jack grimly, "we've frustrated them. And now I'm going to carry them back home and turn them over to the authorities. What will you do?"

"Remain and finish my voyage until I get a full cargo."

The boy then returned to his craft.

On the following day they parted company with the crew of the Harpooner, and while the whaler sailed off to the northward, the almost dismantled Ocean Plunger went off to the southward on her return trip home.

A tempestuous voyage followed, but the gallant vessel bravely weathered the storm, and in due course of time she reached Wrightstown Bay.

Here she was put in Jack's storehouse, and our friends, the two prisoners, and the monkey and parrot went ashore.

It is needless to say how glad all their friends were to see them safely back again.

The rescued men from the Ice King went to New York with Charley Clark to tell their story to the owners of the great metropolitan newspaper, and the fame of Jack Wright was spread far and wide.

Captain Bangs and his mate were brought to the bar of justice for their misdeeds, and were sentenced to prison.

Jack Wright and Tim and Fritz settled back in their beautiful home in Wrightstown, and in due time received the reward for their labor, which they divided among themselves.

A new invention had suggested itself to the boy while he was away, and he now spent all his leisure time at perfecting it, but we can give no account of it here, as our story is finished, yet can promise to do so in another book at an early date.

THE END.

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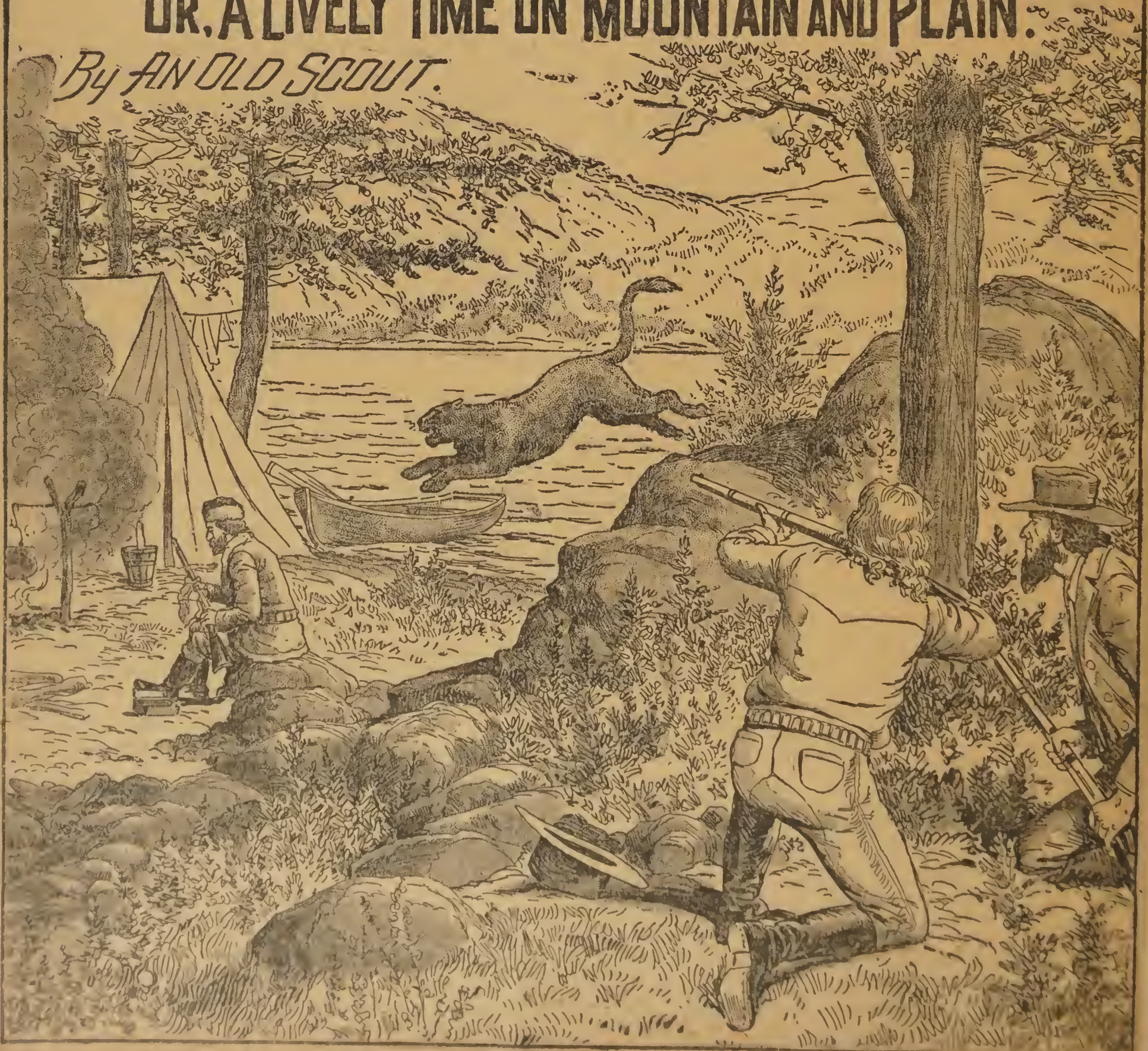
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